

The European Union-Republic of Moldova Mobility Partnership 2008-2011: Evaluation Report

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Executive summary

The present *report* evaluates both the political and the more technical aspects addressed by the *European Union -Republic of Moldova Mobility Partnership (MP)*, and delivers a first comprehensive assessment.

The report, which covers the period from the launch of the MP (June 2008) until the end of 2011, is in response to the call for evaluation formulated in the *Joint Declaration* on a Mobility Partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Moldova (MD). The goals set out in the above-mentioned Declaration were recast into 21 objectives, for which questions and indicators were formulated for the purpose of this evaluation.

The work on the evaluation started in November 2011. The content of the present report, drafted between April and August 2012, is based on the respondents' answers (all institutions from the Republic of Moldova involved in the EU-MD MP implementation, EU Member States participating in the EU-MD MP, international organisations and academia, as well as migrants' organisations) and some additional information (e.g. Eurostat, draft Extended Migration Profile).

The evaluation demonstrated that the EU-MD MP had contributed to the achievement of many **priorities of the partners**, which were closely matched by the implemented projects and initiatives. The MP also helped the partners to address relevant issues related to migration and mobility more effectively and created a conducive framework for the active involvement in migration related discussions and cooperation at both the regional and global levels. Furthermore, the positive influence of the MP extended beyond the area of migration, mobility and home affairs, by building confidence in the context of the overall EU-MD relations. Moreover, the MP contributed significantly to the progress made in the EU-MD Visa Dialogue. On a cautious note, it should be mentioned that in the course of evaluation it was mainly institutional actors (ministries, international organisations, EU services) that were consulted. Although some migrants' organisations also provided answers to a number of questions, there is little to be said about the MPs' effects on individual migrants.

As there were no initially set benchmarks (or some other means of comparison) in place, it is not possible to neatly attribute developments in the relevant fields to the initiatives implemented in the framework of the MP – and it would be difficult to determine to what extent other factors have also influenced these developments. Benchmarks could be used in the future, particularly in the substantive fields covered by the MP. This practice should also be followed for major future partners' initiatives.

Several respondents referred to the non-binding, open and flexible character of the MP as a positive feature. This flexibility enabled bilateral and multilateral initiatives to be accommodated within the same framework. Initiatives in the framework of the MP have been carried out in all three pillars of the **Global Approach to Migration (GAM)**, as well as in the field of international protection, which is the fourth pillar of the **revised Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM)**. Achieving this balance is an ongoing challenge, and the experience gathered in the framework of the EU-MD MP can be shared by the partners and used to good effect in other relevant contexts. It was also suggested that the MP and GAMM could be **more effectively implemented through targeted**

initiatives (as opposed to those financed through calls for proposals), allowing for more joint discussions and planning

The **coordination** created by several structures (*MD National Monitoring Committee, EU Council's High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum, EU-MD MP Task Force, projects' steering committees*) and meetings at the local and EU levels (*High Level Meeting of the MP, Local Cooperation Platform and its extended meeting*) was praised by the respondents who, nevertheless, provided a number of recommendations for improvement and further effective interventions which would also influence the communication between the partners. Most importantly, respondents recommended that partners should **more consistently take advantage of the MP umbrella**, and report all of their activities that involved migration and mobility between MD and the EU. Moreover, it was felt that project ideas should be more widely shared and discussed among the partners prior to initiation. To this end, a number of suggestions were made: increasing the frequency of EU Task Force meetings, strengthening participation of experts from capitals in the Local Cooperation Platform meetings, conducting regular evaluation exercises, improving the exchange of information, facilitating and streamlining the updating of the scoreboard, and strengthening the representation of civil society, including migrants. However, it was also noted that **additional financial and human resources** would be needed in order to implement some of the recommendations.

The majority of respondents assessed the **availability of the necessary information to monitor and manage migration flows** positively. Nevertheless, further improvements were considered necessary, including with regard to supporting the Moldovan authorities in using the data for policy-making. Moreover, more data would be required in areas such as remittances, maintaining links with the MD diaspora, the extent of 'brain drain' from Moldova, the situation of children and elderly persons left behind, as well as the extent of awareness among potential and actual migrants about the possibilities of legal and return migration.

The assessment of the **capacity to formulate and implement migration policies** highlighted the fact that MD authorities have been exceptionally active in drafting new legislative acts in the area of migration and mobility throughout 2008-2012. However, most respondents acknowledged that the capacities of the authorities had been enhanced. An example in this regard – frequently quoted as best practice in terms of capacity building and multilateral cooperation – is the support provided to the Moldovan National Employment Agency. However, respondents felt that more needed to be done, and that there are still complex problems when it comes to ensuring the sustainability of capacity building: the high turnover of personnel in MD institutions was mentioned as one of the serious obstacles to the implementation of the policies in the area.

As far as the **legal/labour migration opportunities, including circular and temporary migration** between the EU and MD are concerned, the MP focused mainly on the regulatory framework. A few small scale pilot initiatives had been launched and, so far, only a limited number of Moldovan labour migrants have participated in these initiatives in practice. The respondents highlighted several areas where cooperation on legal migration could be improved, including facilitating circular migration, portability of social rights and benefits, and developing the labour market in MD in order to reintegrate returning migrants and prevent the 'brain drain'.

The capacities of the Moldovan authorities in the area of **asylum and international protection** have been strengthened, through initiatives implemented under the Mobility Partnership, as well as outside of its scope. However, it has been noted that more efforts are needed in order to strengthen the asylum system, in areas such as integration of refugees.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken as part of the MP in order to provide better **information to migrants and potential migrants**, about legal migration opportunities, the risks of irregular migration and possibilities to return to and reintegrate in MD, and most of the respondents felt that the level of awareness was rising. It was argued that measures such as regular surveys should be developed in order to better assess the effectiveness of the various information and awareness raising campaigns.

The number of **social security agreements** signed by MD with other countries has increased since the launch of the MP, and the ability of the MD authorities to negotiate such agreements has improved. However, the number of MD citizens benefiting from these agreements, and the amounts transferred, remain very limited, leaving considerable room for improving their implementation and further extending their scope. A number of actions have been taken in response to the phenomenon of **children left behind** by migrating parents, which continues to take on disquieting dimensions, and the MP has helped to put this issue high on the cooperation agenda. As for the **elderly left behind**, there are very few figures that could help to quantify the phenomenon, and no specific initiatives have been taken in the framework of the MP. Several respondents are urging that the on-going activities should be continued in the future; however, such efforts need to be based on a comprehensive assessment of the situation in order to increase the efficiency of the response.

There were mixed views on whether **short-term mobility** (of up to three months) between the EU and MD has improved since the launch of the MP. However, significant developments were noted, such as the recently amended EU - Moldova Visa Facilitation Agreement and the EU-MD Visa Dialogue, which has benefitted significantly from the progress of the cooperation effort undertaken in the framework of the MP.

It is still difficult to measure the extent of **'brain drain'** from Moldova due to the lack of data, although – given the overall high rates of out-migration and available figures – it can be assumed that this is a very serious issue. The impact of the projects implemented in the framework of the MP remains rather limited, and many respondents agree that the measures addressing brain drain go far beyond the area of migration policy, relying mainly on the need to foster investments and growth of MD economy. It seems that MP can only partially address this issue, and therefore the goals for MP in this area could be made less ambitious, such as promoting the temporary return of experts.

Similarly, there is virtually no information that could help to quantify the phenomenon of **'brain waste'**, i.e. the inability of MD migrants to put their previously acquired skills and qualifications during migration or upon return to good use. There is only one major initiative within the MP that addresses the issue of the recognition of skills and qualifications, in an attempt to establish a system for skills validation of returning migrants. More efforts are needed to ensure the transparency of skills and qualifications acquired in MD and in the EU, as well as their recognition and transferability to the labour markets.

The available figures point to an increase in academic exchanges between MD and EU MS due to a growing variety of mobility programmes that MD is taking part in and the number of bilateral agreements on cooperation in the field of education with the EU MS. However, the **exchange of students and researchers** has been addressed to only a limited extent in the framework of the MP.

Nevertheless, it is clear that **remittances** constitute a very important source of income for many MD citizens. Some pilot initiatives have been launched under the MP to increase the development impact of remittances on the MD economy and help MD citizens to better manage the financial resources generated by migrants. The limited efforts made in this important area up to now should be broadened out, including by establishing dedicated guarantee, insurance and saving schemes, as well as adopting legislation and policies designed to facilitate investments from migrants. The respondents noted positive developments in the area of **enhancing links with diaspora**, part of which is due to the initiatives developed in the framework of the MP. Nevertheless, in this field – which is potentially very important for the future development of MD – there is still considerable scope for further work, including strengthening services for migrants, a more active distribution of information and holding more frequent liaison events abroad.

In recent years, **border security** in MD has been modernised and border management professionalised, which is due in part to the cooperation under the MP. The security of MD *travel documents* has been improved, especially as a result of the introduction of biometric passports. A number of initiatives have been implemented in that area in the framework of the MP. Also, instances of violations of the border are generally very low.

Many of the initiatives under the MP are designed – at least in part – to reduce and **prevent irregular migration**, most notably those in the areas of readmission, border security, document security or information of migrants. Most of the respondents who provided an assessment noted a reduction in irregular migration from MD to EU. Although the EU – MD **readmission** agreement does not formally fall within the framework of the MP, a number of initiatives have been implemented to support its implementation, thereby increasing its effectiveness. As far as **trafficking in human beings** is concerned, the available figures show that the country has made good progress in preventing human trafficking and assisting victims. Although this progress is mainly due to activities undertaken outside of the scope of the MP, projects within its framework are seen as having also contributed to positive developments in the field, especially in targeting potential victims and vulnerable groups.

I: Introduction and methodology

The Mobility Partnership (MP) between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Moldova (MD) was signed four years ago, and three years ago a first, preliminary evaluation was conducted.¹ This evaluation report now sets out to provide a first comprehensive assessment of the EU-MD MP. The report seeks to evaluate both the political and the more technical aspects covered by the MP and provide a detailed review of its achievements, unveil remaining shortcomings and identify avenues for future cooperation. It responds to the need for evaluation expressed in the original Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova.²

This evaluation report comes at a critical moment, as Mobility Partnerships are set to become the main tools for the EU's future external migration policies.³ The MP between the EU and MD can feed into a particularly comprehensive evaluation because of the breadth of issues it addresses and the intensity and quality of MD-EU relations in the field of mobility and migration. Like other Mobility Partnerships, the EU-MD MP takes the form of a non-formally binding declaration signed by MD, the European Commission (EC) and the EU Member States (MS) that chose to take part in it.

Although it is not binding, the Declaration sets out ambitious goals for a wide range of issues in the realm of migration and mobility between MD and the EU. For the purpose of this evaluation, these goals were rephrased into 21 objectives, for which indicators and evaluative questions were formulated, covering the period from the start of the MP in 2008 until the end of 2011. Where possible, quantitative indicators were devised to track the trends in the areas covered by the EU-MD MP. If data are available, these indicators were measured from 2007 onwards to allow for a comparison with the time before cooperation under the MP started. More often, however, the indicators measure a shorter timeframe as earlier figures were not available. For all questions, respondents were asked to make a qualitative assessment of trends and progress in each field, and to provide ideas to improve future cooperation under the MP.

It is important to note that the Mobility Partnership is only one of many developments in EU-MD relations. Many others have had impact on progress made in the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), including on asylum and migration. Examples include initiatives that actually pre-date the MP (e.g. the Regional Protection Programme or the work of the EU Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine — (EUBAM), and the Visa Dialogue that was launched in parallel to it and has resulted in MD adopting a number of legal instruments and policy measures that impact migration and asylum.

Therefore it would be difficult to directly link the overall success of the MP to the progress measured by the quantitative and qualitative indicators. Hence, the objective of this evaluation is to merely present the progress made since the launch of the MP and assess

¹ See: SEC(2009) 1240.

² Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnership between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova, 9460/08 ADD 1, 21 May 2008.

³ Cp. the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), COM(2011) 743 final.

how it has contributed to the progress made in cooperation between the EU and MD on migration and mobility.

Methodology

Work on the evaluation started in November 2011, with the design of the questionnaire. The idea of conducting an evaluation was presented at the High-Level Mobility Partnership Meeting in the same month, and approved by the MD Government, EC services and participating EU Member States. The work was carried out by an expert contracted by the IOM Mission to Moldova (hereafter referred to as IOM). The MD Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) and European Commission staff (EC) provided supervision. A draft questionnaire was distributed widely to all MD institutions in charge of migration matters in January 2012, following several internal consultations with representatives of these institutions (the first meetings were held in November 2011, during the drafting phase of the questionnaire). The institutions involved were given three weeks to comment on the questionnaire, after which the comments were integrated. The questionnaire was then redistributed, and a deadline set for answering six weeks later. The questionnaire was also sent to several international organisations involved in implementing the projects under the MP and representatives of academia working in or on MD. A slightly altered version of the questionnaire (asking for less quantitative data, and making most questions optional) was then sent to the EU Member States participating in the EU-MD MP and presented at the MP EU Task Force Meeting on 9 March 2012. Changes to the questionnaire were made in response to comments received, and the revised questionnaire was redistributed to the participating Member States, the EEAS and the EU Delegation in Chisinau. A significantly shortened version of the questionnaire (asking only for answers to multiple choice questions and for subjective assessments of developments in the field) was also sent to MD migrant organisations in various EU Member States.

Answers were received from 11 EU Member States:⁴ BG, CZ, DE, FR, HU, IT, PL, RO, SE, SI and SK. The following MD authorities provided data: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI), the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF) and the subordinate National Employment Agency (NEA), the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the subordinate Bureau for Migration and Asylum (BMA) and Centre for Combating Trafficking in Persons, the Ministry of Information Technology and Communication (MITC) and the subordinate Î.S 'CRIS Registru', the Border Guards Service (BGS)⁵/ Border Police Department of the MoI, the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Economy (ME) and the subordinate Organisation for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (OSMED), the National Bureau for Statistics (NBS), the Bureau for Interethnic Relations (BIR), the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) and the State Chancellery (SC). The Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) provided responses in addition to the contribution from the Swedish authorities, due to its involvement in implementing the MP flagship project.

⁴ EU Member States here usually refers to the Member States that are part of the EU-MD MP and submitted a response to the questionnaire. All countries are referred to with their standard two-letter acronyms, according to ISO 3166-1 alpha-2, unless mentioned in the cited text.

⁵ On 1 July 2012, the Border Guard Service was merged into the Border Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova. Hereinafter it is referred to as the BGS.

The following EU services provided input: EC DG HOME and DG DEVCO, EEAS, the EU agencies Frontex and European Training Foundation (ETF) and the EU Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, EUBAM.

Responses were received from the following international organisations and other non-state actors in MD: IOM, ICMPD, and UNHCR. Further contributions came from the European University Institute (EUI), the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and Moldova State University.

Taken together, the above respondents will be referred to as ‘institutional respondents’. Eleven MD migration organisations — six from IT, and one organisation each from DE, FR, GR, LT and SE — also sent their responses to the shortened, multiple-choice version of the questionnaire. All answers written in Romanian were translated into English by the MD MFAIE and the MTF. Drawing on this data and some additional information (e.g. from Eurostat), EC drafted this report in close collaboration with the MTF and the MD MFAIE between April and August 2012.

II: Findings

II/A: Evaluation of the wider MP objectives

The first part of this chapter on findings evaluates the wider objectives of the EU-MD MP, such as increased cooperation and coordination, and achievement of the partner’s political goals. Throughout the chapter, the focus is on summing up the respondents’ own assessments. At the end of each section, and where deemed necessary, additional analyses are given.

II/A/1a: Addressing national and institutional priorities

Overview of developments

The priorities for migration and mobility between the EU and MD differ widely among the partners, and even among different authorities. To get an overview of the differences, it is necessary to first introduce some of the priorities of the partners involved, and cite the initiatives they regard as best practices.

The responses received show that the MP is seen to serve a wide **variety of purposes and priorities**. For instance, **CZ** sees the MP as a tool to facilitate complex, coordinated and systematic capacity building for MD authorities, to increase their effectiveness in terms of migration management (in fields such as document security or social protection) and create opportunities for organising legal migration. CZ sees these priorities pursued best through the project ‘Strengthening Moldova’s Capacity to Manage Labour and Return Migration’,⁶ led by the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES), and the project ‘Building training and analytical capacities on migration in Moldova and Georgia (GOVAC)’, implemented by ICMPD (both projects are financed by the EC).

⁶ The project is referred to as ‘SPES-led project’.

Italy's priorities are to regulate labour migration between IT and MD (including the reduction of irregular migration), reduce the problems of vulnerable populations due to migration and the brain drain of health workers, and improve the overall capacity of MD authorities. Accordingly, IT cites as best practice the initiatives under the Bilateral Agreement (and its executive protocol) on labour migration between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of the Republic of Italy, signed in Rome on 5 July 2011⁷, plus the new WHO-implemented project⁸ and the SPES-led project.

Romania's priorities too are combating irregular migration, strengthening international protection in MD, and enhancing the MD authorities' capacities to manage labour migration. These are best met by its bilateral initiatives and agreements, namely the RO-MD small border traffic agreement, a bilateral protocol on cooperation in the field of asylum and migration, and training. In terms of multilateral initiatives, RO cites the SPES-led project as the initiative that best reflects its priorities.

In a similar vein, **DE** considers the training it has provided to MD on asylum, a workshop to evaluate MD border management conducted together with MD authorities, and efforts to strengthen links between MD authorities and their migrant communities as best matching its priorities. DE's priorities are to strengthen MD institutional capacity on asylum policy and border management, to foster the link of MD communities abroad with their home country, and to strengthen links between the local MD community and DE authorities.

For **SI**, the training it provided to MD in the field of asylum represents a best practice initiative.

BG sees the conclusion of the bilateral social security transfer agreement with MD as such an initiative, not least as it is in line with its priority of concluding such agreements with countries of the former Soviet Union.

Many of the **MD authorities'** priorities in the field of migration and mobility reflect their respective portfolios. For the MD Ministry of Education (MoE), the priorities are skills validation and the promotion of academic mobility and support for returning migrants. For the Ministry of Interior (Mol), the priorities are strengthening national migration management, visa facilitation and readmission, visa liberalisation and maintaining links with MD citizens abroad. For the Ministry of Economy (ME), the priority is to develop SMEs in the regions. For the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF), the priorities are promoting legal and circular migration and monitoring migration flows. The MD Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) adds the respect of rights and interests of Moldovan migrants abroad and cooperation with the EU in the field of JHA (in particular EU-MD Visa Dialogue), the promotion of migrants' social protection, the efficient investment of remittances and the fight against irregular migration and trafficking (including border management and document security) to the list of specific priorities. A shared priority is to

⁷ The IT-MD Labour Migration Agreement was signed on 5 July 2011. To complement it, under the 'Implementation of the Bilateral Agreement on Labour Mobility between Italy and Moldova' project, a Local Coordination Office was set up in Chisinau, and pre-departure courses are offered for MD outgoing migrants under the agreement.

⁸ 'Better managing the mobility of health professionals in the Republic of Moldova' implemented in joint management by the EC and WHO, in collaboration with EU MS.

develop institutional capacity in the field of migration and mobility, as noted by MLSPF, MFAEI, Mol and the MD Border Guards Service (BGS).

Almost without exception, the MD authorities' priorities seem to be closely matched to projects under the MP. This is certainly the case for the MD BGS, MLSPF and Mol, which list three, four and five projects each as best practice initiatives.⁹ For the ME, the priorities are matched by the Programme PARE 1+1, National Economic Empowerment Programme for Youth (PNAET) and the Programme for Business Efficient Management.¹⁰

Assessment and recommendations

The partners overwhelmingly see the **MP as a success**. Of the 11 EU MS, 10 agree or strongly agree that the MP has sufficiently addressed their governments' priorities in the field of migration and mobility between MD and the EU (one EU MS disagrees). The six MD authorities univocally agree as well. EU MS highlight many positive effects as to how the MP is helping to achieve their priorities. For instance, they note that the debate surrounding the MP has led to a **prioritisation of funding** under the Thematic Programme on Migration and Asylum to address the situation of vulnerable populations negatively affected by migration. Projects in which several states collaborated, such as the SPES-led project, have enabled mutual learning among EU MS and offer MD a broader range of experience. The MP also improved the **coordination** and **efficiency** of project work, as it avoided duplicating efforts. The framework created by the MP led to a clearer identification of counterparts, and a **clearer identification of the partners' needs**. The **non-binding, open and flexible** character of the MP is singled out by several EU MS as a particularly positive feature. This flexibility enabled bilateral and multilateral initiatives to be accommodated simultaneously within the same framework. SE welcomed the fact that the MP served as an efficient follow up to the Söderköping process. The EEAS noted that the MP has had a positive influence also beyond

⁹ For the MD MLSPF, these are the projects: 'Strengthening Moldova's capacity to manage labour and return migration' implemented by the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES), 'Effective Governance of Labour Migration and its Skills Dimensions in Moldova' implemented by ILO and financed by the EC, 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership', implemented by IOM and financed by the EC, and 'Addressing the Negative Effects of Migration on Minors and Families Left Behind' (a collaboration of the MD MLSPF with by the IT Ministry of Labour and IOM, financed by the EC and IT). The projects highlighted by the MD Mol as best practices are 'Strengthening capacities and cooperation in identifying false and forged travel documents at the Moldovan-Romanian border', and 'Support to implementation of the EU readmission agreements with the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine: facilitation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (SIREADA)', plus the activities pertaining to the production of the Extended Migration Profile under the project 'Supporting the implementation of migration and development components of Mobility Partnership EU-Moldova', implemented by IOM and financed by the EC. Furthermore, the projects 'Supporting the Implementation of the EC visa facilitation and readmission agreements in Moldova and Georgia (REVIS)' and 'Building training and analytical capacities on migration in Moldova and Georgia (GOVAC)', implemented by ICMPD and financed by the EC, and the activities aiming at strengthening the MD asylum system offered by DE are rated by the MD Mol as best practice initiatives. The MD BGS cites the MD-RO border project, the SIREADA project and the REVIS projects as reflecting its needs and priorities.

¹⁰ These are National Economic Empowerment Program for Youth (PNAET), and a Program for Remittance Attraction in the Economy (PARE 1+1), which is partially supported by the project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership' implemented by IOM and financed by the EC. However, in terms of budget, the Pare 1+1 is a relatively small pilot initiative.

the area of home affairs, in building confidence in the overall EU-MD relationship, and in implementing the ENP Action Plan.

MD authorities drew up a list of the positive influences of the MP, noting that it has strengthened cooperation on a wide range of issues in the field of justice and home affairs, including asylum, border management, detection of false travel documents, combating transnational irregular migration, evidence-based policy making and the re-integration of returnees into the MD labour market. The MP was also deemed to have significantly contributed to the progress made in the EU-MD visa dialogue and that it helped to protect the rights and interests of MD migrants abroad. At the same time, MD authorities would welcome further progress on facilitating legal/circular/labour migration — a view supported by IOM in its proposals. The MD Ministry of Education points out that, although the MP may well have contributed implicitly to academic mobility, no projects specifically on this area have been launched. The MD Ministry of Economy encourages better communication within the partnership to increase participation.

Although it highlights that collaboration is based on a bilateral agreement and not on the MP, **Frontex** highlights that the priorities listed in the annex to the MP (points 10 ii. and 10 iii.) were fully achieved with its assistance. Notably, border management has been strengthened¹¹ and the Common Core Curriculum and training courses on document security are being implemented.

While the respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the MP served their priorities well, from an analytical perspective, the above-mentioned portfolio and institution focus of the priorities and best practices may both bespeak a good level of division of labour and awareness within fields of competence and, conversely, that MP coordination has not yet led to a coherent shared view of the interaction between migration, national development and EU integration.¹² A coherent and consensus-building framework such as the MP should ideally prompt MD institutions to mention crosscutting and national priorities and/or best practices outside of their specific sector.

This may be one of the reasons why there was an uneven view of whether future changes to the way the MP is implemented or designed could improve the partnership. Six (of 19) respondents clearly stated that the MP should be implemented differently. Five respondents disagreed and eight do not have a clear opinion.

With regard to specific proposals for initiatives to match the partners' priorities, IT suggests expanding the options for legal migration, including as a way to reduce irregular migration in a sustainable way. These could be coupled with pre-departure skills and language training. BG states its intention to start negotiating an agreement in this vein.

The MD authorities gave the following list of future areas of cooperation. First, they would like to have some **new priorities**.

¹¹ This has been achieved through initiatives such as joint operations, pilot projects and the participation of MD authorities in the Frontex Eastern Borders Risk Analysis Network.

¹² The latter reading would also have an indirect bearing from the perspective of whole-of-government coherence on the enhanced capacity to formulate and implement migration policies, analysed under II/B/5.

1. Follow up with the production and use of the Extended Migration Profile, which would need further support to become sustainable.
2. New agreements and projects should be launched on circular migration.
3. Stronger cooperation in the field of academic mobility, especially in the form of bilateral agreements with the main destination countries of MD students, notably IT, PT, FR, GR and the non-MP country ES.
4. New activities focusing on vulnerable migrants should be devised.
5. The efficient use of remittances should be fostered.
6. Access to scholarships for studies in the EU.
7. Agreements on the recognition of grades and qualifications.
8. Work to bring MD's life-long learning system up to EU standards.
9. Strengthening information exchange and cooperation through agreements and twinning projects bringing together EU MS and MD institutions charged with migration and border issues to step up information exchange and cooperation.
10. Finally, activities focusing on vulnerable migrants should be devised. The experience gained in the EU-MD MP should be widely shared with new MP partner countries.

It is striking that EU MS cite as best practice initiatives mainly their own, bilateral initiatives. Reducing irregular migration, though, which is undisputedly a priority of many EU MS, is more directly addressed through EU-financed projects implemented by international organisations such as ICMPD or IOM. With the exception of CZ, which cited the GOVAC project, the EU MS did not cite these initiatives as best practice under the MP. By contrast, MD authorities mainly consider EU-funded projects as best reflecting their priorities. The only initiative seen by both MD and EU MS as matching their respective priorities, is the SPES-led project on '**Strengthening Moldova's capacity to manage labour and return migration**'. It tackles a complex area that is difficult to address in small-scale, bilateral projects and draws on substantial EC funding. Different partners¹³ bring to bear their own skills and experiences and collaborate closely with the local authorities. As such, the project could serve as an example for future cooperation under MPs.

It should also be noted that caution is warranted when interpreting this initial analysis. The positive assessments provided in this section are given by **institutions**, which are only one of the targeted beneficiaries of the MP. Little can be inferred from this section about how much the MP benefits the targeted beneficiaries — **citizens**.

¹³ 12 EU MS were partners of this project.

II/A/1b: Implementing the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

Overview of developments

The Global Approach to Migration (GAM), currently revised as the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) following the Commission's Communication of November 2011 and Council Conclusions of 29 May 2012,¹⁴ has contributed to the EU approach to external migration policies since 2005. Under the GAM, the EU's external migration policies were to be equally based on the three pillars: legal migration, migration and development and the fight against irregular migration. Mobility Partnerships were forged as one of the main vehicles to implement the GAM.

Analysing the implementation of the MP objectives, it becomes clear that **initiatives have been carried out in all three pillars of the GAM, and in the field of international protection, the fourth pillar of the new GAMM**. Respondents cited many exemplary initiatives under each pillar. For instance, with regard to fighting **irregular migration**, the SIREADA¹⁵ and the REVIS¹⁶ projects are regarded as flagship initiatives, providing, among other things, support to implement the EU-MD readmission agreement. The **migration-development nexus** has been addressed through support granted to the MD National Employment agency,¹⁷ through multiple initiatives under the IOM-implemented, the EU-financed project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership', and initiatives addressing the situation of minors and elderly people negatively affected by migration of their family members.¹⁸ More recently, flagship initiatives have been developed in the field of **legal migration**, too, with PL including MD citizens in its temporary labour migration scheme,¹⁹ and MD and IT concluding their bilateral labour migration agreement allowing for circular migration, complemented by pre-departure language and vocational training. In the field of **international protection**, MD has received close support from RO, DE, SK, HU and SI.

The balance between the three pillars is very hard to quantify, however. One method is to compare the funds provided in each area. But some measures do not require major monetary investment to yield significant effects. One such example is PL including MD citizens in its temporary labour migration scheme. Another problem arises if funds serve multiple purposes, partly corresponding to the objectives of the EU-MD MP, and partly not.

¹⁴COM(2011) 743 final.

¹⁵ 'Support to implementation of the EU readmission agreements with the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine: facilitation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (SIREADA)', implemented by IOM and financed by the EC.

¹⁶Supporting the Implementation of the EC Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements in Moldova and Georgia (REVIS), implemented by ICMPD and financed by the EU.

¹⁷ Through the project 'Strengthening of Moldova's Capacity to Manage Labour and Return migration' implemented by SPES.

¹⁸ A major initiative in this field is the project 'Addressing the negative effects of migration on minors and families left-behind', conducted by IT in collaboration with IOM and co-funded by the EC and IT.

¹⁹ Referred to under section II/B/6 of this report.

An example is the significant amount granted to MD to improve its border security.²⁰ The measures implemented in this area serve to fight irregular migration, but also to stop cross-border crime — a field not covered by the MP. A third problem is that **figures remain patchy**. Especially for bilateral projects between EU MS and MD, expenses have often not been reported. Notwithstanding these important qualifications, and taking the figures reported in the remaining parts as a measure, the balance of reported monetary funds committed between 2008-2011 is as follows: very roughly measured, funding for initiatives on legal migration and mobility amounted to about €3 million, funding for initiatives to combat irregular migration and trafficking (excluding material support to border security) totalled about €6 million, and funding for initiatives in the field of migration and development totalled about €7 million.²¹ Initiatives in the field of international protection received about €365000 in funds.

The partners shared their experience with the EU-MD MP and used it in other contexts, thus **strengthening policy coherence in the spirit of the GAMM**. Especially when designing, negotiating and developing the EU-GE MP and the EU-AM MP, partners could refer to the MP with MD. MD authorities, on a range of occasions and in line with the priorities set by the MD Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, shared their insights with the ‘new’ countries that concluded a MP with the EU. There was also cross-fertilisation between the MP and other processes and initiatives on migration, such as the Prague process, the Söderköping process (replaced and continued by the Migration and Asylum Panel within the EaP), regional events to create a platform for discussion on the contribution of the Eastern Partners in implementing the EU’s Stockholm Programme, organised with the support of the ‘EU Migration Expertise’ Initiative (MIEUX) or the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), where the EU-MD MP was cited as a best practice initiative, not least due to the same actors being involved in several processes.

Assessment and recommendations

The assessment made by institutional respondents as to whether the GAMM has been effectively implemented through the MP could hardly be clearer: 16 out of 19 respondents (84%) **agreed or strongly agreed** that it has (three did not voice a clear opinion). This is also reflected in the more detailed assessments provided by the partners. They highlighted that the MP does not only reflect the pillar structure of the GAMM but that it has **built trust through close cooperation on a daily basis**. One EU MS that had previously given assistance to MD on asylum and international protection welcomes that these areas are now reflected in the new GAMM. MD authorities welcomed the scope it has to **address cross-cutting issues**.

Several respondents highlighted the MP as a **tailor-made instrument**, which reflects the ‘more for more’ approach of the partners and a framework facilitating dialogue. According to ICMPD, these discussions have led to very concrete cooperation with the aim of fighting irregular migration. The MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and IOM note

²⁰ Expenses for border security 2006-12 amounted to about €28.6 million. Most of these funds were used to purchase technical equipment. Another €60 million was used to finance the EU Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine — EUBAM.

²¹ The recommendation made in SEC(2009) 1240 to give more weight to the migration and development dimension has therefore been followed up.

that the pilot projects on legal and circular migration have only become possible due to sustained discussions in the framework of the MP. The small-scale pilot schemes on circular migration with IT could become an example for future initiatives in this field.

Three respondents are of the opinion that the GAMM could be more efficiently implemented in the future by changing the way the partnership is implemented (another three disagree, 13 do not state a clear opinion) and two deem it necessary to change the design of the partnership (another two disagree, 15 do not state a clear opinion). It is suggested that all the pillars of GAMM could be more effectively implemented if **more targeted initiatives for cooperation** were introduced, reflecting each pillar, and generating more specific discussions and planning of future projects.

II/A/2: Coordination under the MP

Overview of developments

In MD and at EU level, there are multi-layered structures for coordinating activities under the MP.

Local coordination between MD authorities, EU MS and implementing partners is organised through the **Local Cooperation Platform**. The Platform brings together representatives of EU MS (usually from the local embassies), European Commission staff and representatives of MD authorities, and is co-chaired by the EU Delegation in Chisinau and representatives of the MD government. A meeting is organised once a year. In its extended form, the Local Cooperation Platform includes implementing partners and representatives of IOs. Its purpose is to coordinate initiatives among partners. Some initiatives under the MP (such as the project ‘Strengthening of Moldova’s Capacity to Manage Labour and Return Migration’ implemented by the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES)) have project steering committees, which serve to bring together those involved in implementing the projects. In the above-mentioned project, these include representatives of MD employer associations and trade unions along with representatives of participating EU MS and MD authorities. At the **EU level**, general political guidance and coordination is provided by the Council’s **High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum** (HLWG). The dedicated **EU-MD MP Task Force** has the specific task of coordinating activities under the MP. It brings together representatives of the ministries responsible for the EU-MD MP from the partner EU MS, representatives of the EEAS, the Council Secretariat, and the different EC DGs and EU agencies involved in designing and implementing the MP. Task Force meetings are chaired by EU staff and take place according to need. A **high-level meeting on the MP** between MD, EU MS and EU institutional representatives takes place once a year.

However, no clear trend can be identified as to whether the share of initiatives involving more than one MS has increased over the course of the MP (this would be a likely result of increasing coordination among partners). What is clear from the scoreboard²² is that the total number of initiatives launched each year peaked in 2009, and has fallen since then

²²A table with ongoing and implemented initiatives used to monitor implementation of the MP.

(although one can certainly question whether the number of initiatives started is a good measure for the intensity of action 'on the ground'). In 2009, the share of initiatives started that involve more than one partner also was the highest, at 19% (5 out of 26 new initiatives). In 2010, this share fell to 0% (0 out of 14 new initiatives), and in 2011 it stood at 14% (1 out of 7 new initiatives).

Assessment and recommendations

In their assessment, a clear majority of institutional respondents (12 out of 19) agreed that the MP has boosted the **coordination of activities** in the field of migration and mobility (one disagreed, six neither agreed nor disagreed). Improved coordination was cited as one of the most significant achievements of the EU-MD MP. However, just as clear a majority (11 out of 19) of respondents stated that coordination could be further improved by changing the design of the MP (one disagreed, seven neither agreed nor disagreed) and many respondents provided detailed comments, as indicated below.

The **Task Force** was appreciated by virtually all EU MS respondents as a useful forum for exchange and coordination. However, respondents regret that the frequency of meetings (including distance meetings) has dropped dramatically, not least due to less funds being available to EU MS. In this context, it is suggested to hold additional meetings via video-link or similar technologies.

The **Local Cooperation Platform** was also regarded as very useful and necessary mechanism bringing together the stakeholders. But respondents see ample room to improve its functioning. They suggest convening the Platform regularly; improving the communication of results back to the capitals; inviting more representatives from the capitals to take part in the Platform, as embassy staff often lack the specialised knowledge;²³ and involving local representatives of international bodies more (e.g. UNHCR, EUBAM).

Several respondents highlighted the need for **regular evaluation and monitoring** of local cooperation to assess and improve the efficiency and impact of initiatives. For this purpose, annual evaluation meetings could be held, which would need to draw on a dedicated evaluation mechanism (e.g. a short yearly survey including qualitative and quantitative indicators).

Project steering committees are seen as crucial to implement larger projects, but respondents suggested convening **more steering committee meetings** to allow for consultation and coordination between the partners, starting at the project planning stage.

Respondents suggested that, to improve coordination, **access to information on initiatives** under the MP (especially large-scale initiatives financed by the EC) should be improved and provided sooner to enable involvement at an early stage. In this context, restructuring the scoreboard, sending regular newsletters²⁴ and improving information delivery by the EC are suggested. The EC noted that gathering information from the EU MS has proved to be difficult and only a few regularly provide updates to the scoreboard. Therefore, it should become regular practice to send a summary of the achievements of completed projects to update the scoreboard and distribute it to all partners. Since gathering data on the exact

²³ This shortcoming was already discussed in SEC(2009) 1240 final.

²⁴ Newsletters are sent regularly, and are available online on the website of the MD MFAIE.

financial contribution and spending on various projects is proving to be problematic, it is suggested that these summaries contain information on total financial expenditure.

The EUI pointed out that a major impediment to better coordination is the **limited capacity** of MD institutions (under the Migration Technical Facility, the EC already provides funding²⁵ to support the coordinator for MP matters within the MD government). MD institutions suffer from a loss of staff to external employers, including other organisations involved in implementing the MP.

On this, MD authorities suggested involving more than one person per institution in coordination meetings, to ensure continuation if an official leaves the job. The EUI pointed out that the EU Delegation in Chisinau lacks the capacity to more closely coordinate or monitor the EU-MD MP, and suggested creating the post of officer in charge of these tasks.

There is almost no consultative structure in the whole coordination set up that includes **representatives of direct beneficiaries of the MP** (migrants, diaspora organisations, refugees, etc.). Occasional exceptions are project steering committees. The main reason for this is that there is no body/organisation that adequately represents the interests of all Moldovan migrants abroad. However, consultations on the MP could be held with migrants and diaspora organisations during the Moldovan Diaspora Congress, which takes place in Chisinau every two years. Another proposal would be to regularly share draft documents on the MP with existing (small-scale) organisations, asking them to send non-binding comments.

The EEAS noted the need to step up the **political steering** of the MP in the political or technical (such as the JLS Subcommittee) structures under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

It is also important to mention that **more investment in human resources** will be necessary to achieve any of the above suggestions, including enhanced coordination mechanisms, provision of up-to-date information or regularly evaluating activities. Staff in the EC, the EEAS and the MD authorities are already working at their limit, and it is unrealistic to assume that they can take on new tasks.

II/A/3: Inter-departmental coordination and communication about the MP

Overview of developments

EU MS have rather different approaches to internal coordination on MP matters. For a start, different ministries are in charge of overall coordination, depending on the national priorities under the MP. In some MS it is the Ministry of Interior, in some the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, or, in FR, the *'Secrétariat général pour l'immigration et l'intégration'*. Some MS do not seem to have appointed a lead authority in charge of

²⁵ Under the project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership', implemented by IOM.

coordination of MP matters.²⁶ Most commonly, EU MS work with one or several (one in each Ministry involved) **focal points** in charge of regular coordination. Most countries use their standard methods of inter-departmental communication (e.g. reports shared among ministries) in addition to communication through contact points. One country has set up a dedicated inter-agency working group on the MP, and uses its Eastern Partnership working group to discuss MP matters. Some countries have not set up formalised coordination structures, but report intense informal communication. Some countries receive reports on developments within the MP from their MD-based embassies. The frequency of reported communication on MP matters varies widely, from daily to sporadic. In most cases, communication and coordination takes place when a project starts or ends, or during meetings with other partners, notably the Local Cooperation Platform or MP Task Force meetings. Efficient coordination between EU capitals, their representations in Brussels and in Chisinau is crucial to communication.

MD authorities coordinate internally through the **EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership National Monitoring Committee**, which brings together national authorities charged with migration matters and is chaired by the MD Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Protection and Family. The Committee usually meets at least quarterly, but more often if necessary. It normally comprises all Ministries and authorities tasked with migration matters. If needed, non-state institutions can be invited to participate in its activities.

MP-related activities are also discussed in the **Commission for the Coordination of Activities Related to Migration Process**, which also meets quarterly and in a similar composition, but is chaired by the MD Minister of Interior. According to the respondents, an important role in the day-to-day coordination of the MP is filled by the **Migration Technical Facility**, which supports MD authorities in their work on the MP. The post is located in the MD Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

Assessment and recommendations

Just over half of the institutional respondents (8 out of 15) are satisfied with the way their interdepartmental communication and coordination functions. Two respondents disagreed, however, with the statement that coordination between departments is organised in a way so as to ensure effective collaboration under the MP. The others chose not to state an opinion.

One MD authority commented that activities are often implemented by one authority only, which then implements it without further coordination with other authorities. The High Level Policy Adviser to the MD Mol Bureau for Migration and Asylum highlighted the **coordination role of the MFAIE**. The MD MFAIE, in its capacity as MP National Focal Point, played a particularly valuable inter-agency coordination role and has contributed to a more active and targeted participation of MD authorities in regional and global initiatives on migration and mobility.

²⁶ Some EU MS are involved in one subject area only, concerning only a limited number of people in one ministry. These countries therefore stated that they did not see the need to designate a lead authority.

With view to further improving coordination, one EU MS suggested setting up a dedicated inter-institutional MP task force within its administration, and another suggested creating a national focal point. The MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family suggested involving beneficiary institutions in **coordination, starting with the project planning phase**. The MD Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration noted that, in the future, a representative of the State Chancellery would be invited to join the **National Monitoring Committee for the MP**.

While many efforts were made and support given to ensure effective coordination by MD, the various authorities had suggestions to improve their own internal coordination, e.g. in the form of a workshop to share best practice, or regular inter-institutional meetings. The idea of **joint responsibility and ownership** is to take root among MD authorities to step up internal coordination of the initiatives implemented under the MP.

II/B: Evaluation of specific areas of action

This section analyses progress in the specific areas in which the MP seeks to have an impact. Again, the analysis draws on assessments by Moldovan authorities, EU MS, the Commission Services, other partners and members of the Moldovan migrant community. Unlike in the previous section, where possible, it gives quantitative data to highlight trends in each area of action. Unless indicated otherwise, figures quoted were taken from the replies to the evaluation questionnaire. Some data has been retrieved from the Extended Migration Profile for MD, or from Eurostat. The trends shown in the indicators are first described, then a summary is given of the initiatives carried out and legal acts adopted in each area of action. Third, it presents the partner's assessment of progress in the field, followed by ideas for potential improvements. In some cases, the evaluators have made some additional observations.

II/B/4: Availability and accessibility of the information needed to monitor and manage migration

Overview of developments

The respondents use a wide range of information sources to monitor and manage migration between Moldova and the EU. Many EU MS use national data collection tools such as **consular databases** and **migration and asylum systems** as their prime information source. Sources such as **the Eastern Borders Risk Analysis Network** (under the auspices of Frontex, and accessible through the ICONet network), information provided by **EUBAM**, or such found in **Eurostat** databases, are also widely used. MD authorities use a range of different information sources too, including the integrated automatic information system on migration and asylum (SIIAMA, used by the Moldovan Ministry of Interior), the integrated automatic information system on border security (SIIAGS, used by the Border Guard Service) and the Consular Services register (used by the MFAEI). The MD Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration deems the Migration Profile to be a useful and easily available

information tool, which is substantially broadened through the development of the Extended Migration Profile.

The partners have been active in implementing projects that aim to generate, improve, and make accessible information needed to monitor and manage migration between MD and the EU.²⁷ At least 25 initiatives have been carried out in this area since 2008, and approximately €1.56 million has been committed to action in this area. Notable initiatives are the work on the **Extended Migration Profile** for MD, increasing training and the analytical capacity of the authorities to improve their production and use of available data, developing integrated institutional and inter-institutional automatic information systems, and **strengthening the MD National Employment Agency's capacity** (by creating an information system on labour migration and a call centre, for instance).

Assessment and recommendations

The institutional respondents gave a positive assessment of **the availability and accessibility of information**. Eight out of 16 respondents agreed that all data they need to monitor and manage migration between Moldova and the EU is available, and ten out of 16 respondents are satisfied with access to this information. One non-state actor pointed out that MD can actually be considered as a best practice example in the region in terms of availability of, and ease of access to information on migration. The MD government is recognised as being cooperative in providing the data. Further work and support on **data collection and processing** is still needed,²⁸ but it is suggested that one of the main priorities for future work should be to help Moldovan authorities enhance their **capacity to use the available data for policy making**.

However, nine out of 16 institutional respondents see room for improvement. One EU MS suggested compiling a statistics sheet that sums up important migration figures from EU MS sources.²⁹ Another EU MS was in favour of stepping up cooperation with the Moldovan Embassies and diaspora organisations, especially on mechanisms to collect and disseminate information. A MD authority suggested setting up a state institution in charge of employment of citizens abroad, monitoring the activities of private employment agencies and the migration of labour force.

Both the MD Mol and the MD BGS highlighted that little information is exchanged between their services and the Integrated Automated Information Systems run by them. MD Mol stressed the need to develop migration information subsystems in all Moldovan institutions

²⁷ According to various institutional respondents, such information would be the number of MD returnees from EU MS, the number of illegal border crossings and illegal stays detected and the modus operandi of irregular migrants. The MD authorities did not indicate what data and information they consider necessary.

²⁸ Such needs, e.g. making the full SIIAMA system operational, are discussed in the Data Assessment Report commissioned by IOM, at http://www.iom.md/attachments/110_data_assess_rep_eng.pdf. At the time of completion of this Evaluation Report, a two-year action plan is being drafted as part of the EMP exercise to produce and regularly update the Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova providing for follow-up action in areas of need.

²⁹ Statistical sheets providing such information are provided by the CARIM East database that can be accessed at <http://www.carim-east.eu/database/demographic-and-economic-module/?search=1&fromto=from&cmct=Moldova&nocmct=European+Union>. The database was created thanks to EC funding.

and ensure their integration into SIIAMA.³⁰ The role of non-state actors in supporting the partners' efforts in the production and use of data is acknowledged (e.g. support of the IOM in the production of the EMP and other data sources in MD via EC-funded projects).

From the different responses to this question it appears that, although the overall availability of migration-related information has improved and will improve further through the projects currently underway (notably the Extended Migration Profile), there is **too little information available on crucial themes** such as remittances, the level of awareness of potential and actual migrants about legal migration and return possibilities, the extent of the brain drain from Moldova, or the situation of children and elderly people left without care, due to their relatives migrating.

The various respondents (including MD authorities) all cited different information tools, and none cited any of the tools mentioned by other institutions. The Extended Migration Profile was mainly mentioned by non-state actors. When asked what data they consider necessary, only a few MD authorities answered. It is therefore not clear whether they have a clear vision of their own data needs.

II/B/5: Enhanced capacity to formulate and implement migration policies

Overview of developments

Simply focusing on the numbers of staff responsible for formulating and implementing migration policies in MD gives little indication to suggest that MD has increased its capacity in this regard. There has been virtually no change since 2007. The MD authorities consistently report the equivalent of eight persons responsible for these tasks. Only IOM reports an increase from four persons in 2007 to five in 2008 tasked with assisting MD authorities in formulating and implementing policies.

However, MD authorities were exceptionally active in **drafting new legislative acts** from 2008-2012. A law on labour migration was adopted in July 2008,³¹ and a new law on asylum in December the same year.³² In July 2010, a law on foreigners was adopted.³³ The National Strategy on Migration and Asylum for the years 2011-2020 was adopted in September 2011, and a corresponding Action Plan in January 2012. In the field of border management and security, implementation of the IBM Strategy³⁴ was followed up with a new law on the State border adopted in November 2011,³⁵ and the law on border police adopted in December 2011.³⁶

Training sessions and study visits aiming at **capacity building** were organised by PL, HU, DE and SI, either financed through TAIEX or national budgets. The EC is financing several large projects in this field. Benefiting both Ukraine and Moldova is the project aimed at capacity

³⁰ This is also discussed in the Data Assessment Report commissioned by IOM, which can be accessed via http://www.iom.md/attachments/110_data_assess_rep_eng.pdf.

³¹ Law No 180 of 10 July 2008 on Labour Migration.

³² Law No 270-XVI of 18 December 2008 on Asylum in Moldova.

³³ Law No 200 of 16 July 2010 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova.

³⁴ Integrated Border Management Strategy 2011-2013 approved by the GD No 1212 of 27 December 2010.

³⁵ Law No 215 of 4 December 2011 on State Border.

³⁶ Law No 283 of 28 December 2011 on Border Police.

building for legal migration with a budget of €800 000 (approx. share for MD), implemented by the ILO.³⁷ A project that aims to build capacity for labour and return migration with a budget of €3.2 million is implemented by the Swedish Employment Service (SPES).³⁸ Finally, in January 2011, the GOVAC project implemented by ICMPD was launched. This aims to step up the MD authorities' training and analytical capacity regarding migration (with an approximate budget of €490 000 (approx. share for MD)).³⁹ The MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF) acknowledges the support received for their input to the Migration and Asylum strategy.⁴⁰ The Bureau of Migration and Asylum of the MD Ministry of Interior acknowledges the assistance that a national consultant provided to develop the Migration and Asylum Legal/Policy Framework. This was granted under a UNDP project⁴¹ and does not fall under the MP. The MD Border Guard Service, which also helped draft the above acts, cited the support received by the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Moldova and the Academy of Science,⁴² which boosted its capacity in this area.

Assessment and recommendations

Asked whether MD authorities could enhance their capacity to **design and implement migration policies** since 2008, the respondents had **mixed views**. On the one hand, most respondents (11 out of 16) thought that MD authorities' capacity had been enhanced. Several EU MS and MD authorities gave positive assessments of the developments over the past four years. The projects they highlighted are the support to draft the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum and the corresponding Action Plan, the Law on Foreigners and other normative legal acts of the Republic of Moldova.

On the other hand, one EU MS doubted that MD ministries have sufficient capacity to actually implement measures, and therefore **questioned the need for and usefulness of capacity enhancement measures**. Another EU MS saw the political situation in MD as impeding progress in this field. This critical view is mirrored by a MD authority, which stated that it has not been able to strengthen its capacities for the last four years due to **high turnover of staff**. EUI warned that capacity building is futile if qualified staff leaves the institution after being trained.

³⁷ Exact name of the project: 'Effective Governance of Labour Migration and its Skill Dimensions'.

³⁸ Exact name of the project: 'Strengthening the Republic of Moldova capacity to manage labour and return migration'. The project is partly financed by SE.

³⁹ Exact name of the project: 'Building training and analytical capacities on migration in Moldova and Georgia (GOVAC)'. The project follows the priorities of the external dimension of the European Union's migration policy, as it covers all three main areas of this policy: better organising legal migration, reinforcing the prevention and fight against irregular migration, and maximising the mutual benefits of migration for development. Moreover, as the GOVAC project mainly focuses on development and strengthening of educational structures (vocational training and high education in migration area), the results of the project also contribute to the countries' development in general.

⁴⁰ This support, according to MLSPF, was offered through the IOM implemented and EC sponsored project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership'.

⁴¹ Exact name of the project: 'Transitional Capacity Support for the Public Administration of Moldova'. More information can be found at <http://www.undp.md/projects/TCS.shtml>.

⁴² Support of the Academy of Public Administration under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Moldova and the Academy of Science through the organisation of thematic training courses.

With view to the future, about a third (5 out of 16) of the institutional respondents saw a need to adjust the framework of the MP to more effectively support the MD authorities to build up their capacity to formulate and implement migration policies. One EU MS suggested offering comprehensive support to MD to frame and implement strategies on labour migration, linking up with Moldovan nationals residing and working abroad, redirecting remittances from consumption to investment, preventing the brain drain and involving social partners in migration policy making. Another EU MS stressed that the focus should rather be on implementing existing strategies tangibly before supporting new regulatory measures.

MD authorities would welcome **more support for labour migration** (for instance, to foster return migration and circular migration), increases in the number of staff employed in the units responsible for framing labour migration policies, and more implementation of projects in the ministries to continue strengthening capacity. They also suggested strengthening direct links between MD and EU MS ministries in charge of formulating and implementing migration policies (including border protection), for instance through bi- and multilateral inter-institutional agreements on information exchange and cooperation. Investment in the MD economy should be encouraged to create new jobs, which would slow the outflow of MD citizens and contribute to the country's development.

According to IOM, the priorities for capacity building should be to **foster implementation of the Extended Migration Profile to ensure its sustainability**. This should be done by training staff, launching twinning programmes with EU MS institutions and study visits. Granting technical support in the form of IT equipment should also be considered. IOM also suggests investing more in the Integrated Automatic Information System on Migration and Asylum (SIAMA) so that it is implemented and operational in all relevant institutions.

The EUI suggests placing particular importance on funding **specific surveys** on topics of interest, such as the brain drain, to put the Moldovan authorities in a better position to formulate policies on this important issue.

II/B/6: Legal/labour migration, including circular and temporary migration

Overview of developments

The total number of **Moldovan citizens living and working in the EU** can be estimated only approximately due to the irregular situation of some of them, a fact which makes the analysis of the trends in recent years difficult. The Extended Migration Profile includes the indicators 'Number of Moldovan citizens living abroad, according to Moldovan data' and 'Number of Moldovan citizens living abroad, according to data from host countries'. The first indicator shows that in 2010 there were 92 184 MD citizens living abroad, compared to 73 431 in 2007. According to the second indicator, the figures were 171 933 for 2011, up from 111 952 in 2007. It should be noted that these figures refer to MD citizens abroad, not solely in the EU.

Eurostat indicates the **stock of permits** (valid for 12 months) held by Moldovan citizens for remunerated activities issued by EU countries at 89 822 in 2010, up from 81 070 in 2008. This general trend has significant variations in different EU MS. While in almost all EU MS the

number of MD citizens holding a work permit declined, sometimes very significantly (this applies especially to those EU MS affected severely by the economic crisis⁴³), this decline was overcompensated by a stark increase in MD work permit holders in IT, where the numbers rose from 58 514 in 2008 to 79 633 in 2010.

As far as **circular and temporary migration** is concerned, only FR, IT and PL provided specific data (other countries provided aggregated data for all work permits). As the national definitions differ, these numbers are not strictly comparable. The only data on circular migration was provided by FR that indicates that in 2009, 42 MD citizens were engaged in circular migration, up from 23 in 2007. A common feature of temporary migration is that work permits are issued for a period of less than 12 months. For 2010, FR reports a number of 80 MD temporary workers, while the number is 3453 for IT. PL reports very substantial increases in the numbers of MD temporary workers: from 2747 in 2009 to 6 540 in 2011. According to Eurostat, other partner countries such as CZ or CY also issued temporary work permits to MD citizens.

Activities under the MP in this field have mainly focused on the regulatory sphere: PL in 2009 has extended its **temporary labour migration scheme** to allow MD citizens to work 6 months in PL without the need for a work permit. In 2010, HU sponsored a study visit for MD experts. In 2011, IT and MD concluded a **labour migration agreement**, which provides for pre-departure training and improvements in the methods of recruitment and labour matching. Implementation of the agreements by the MD authorities is supported by IOM through the EU and IT-funded project 'Implementation of the bilateral agreement on labour mobility between Italy and Moldova'. Under the project 'Strengthening the Republic of Moldova's capacity to manage labour and return migration', implemented by the Swedish Employment Service (SPES) and funded by the EC, information about the options of regular migration to the EU has been made available. The Automatic Information System (AIS) '**Evidence of Labour migration**' developed under the same project and currently used by the MD National Employment Agency (NEA) will also generate statistics on migrant workers and emigrants, which will facilitate the elaboration of policies in this area. As part of the project's activities, CZ provided additional assistance to the MD NEA.

Assessment and recommendations

In their assessment, several EU MS stressed the detrimental influence of the **economic crisis** on the facilitation of labour migration since the MP was concluded in 2008. 4 out of 10 EU MS stated that, in principle, the MP has had a positive influence and there are now more options for regular labour migration, but all the other institutional respondents viewed the situation as fairly stagnant. A slight majority (6 out of 11) MD diaspora organisations saw an **improvement in the options for legal migration** (two organisations strongly disagreed, however), and 7 out of 11 saw the MP as having had an important influence. PL highlighted that MD citizens are increasingly making use of the new opportunities under the new legislation. MD authorities acknowledged that the MP has facilitated dialogue on circular migration, and on labour migration in general, but concrete results are still limited to **small-**

⁴³ For instance, in PT, the number of MD work permit holders fell from 3 125 in 2008 to 433 in 2010, in GR from 5 696 in 2008 to 4 200 in 2010, and in CZ, it fell from 4 570 in 2008 to 3 619 in 2010.

scale pilot schemes, meaning that only a few individuals so far have benefited from circular migration schemes. This was also highlighted by IOM.

Respondents made a range of suggestions on future options to foster legal/labour migration between EU and MD, including circular and temporary migration. One EU MS suggested extending pre-departure training, including language training, for migrants leaving to an EU country. Another MS suggested maintaining regular labour migration of higher educated MD citizens, based on the **EU Blue Card scheme**. The mutual recognition of social benefits between MD and RO was quoted as an important step to support circular and temporary migration between these countries. One MD authority (MLSPF) deems it necessary to conclude **further bilateral agreements** on circular migration, something also highlighted by IOM. The recently concluded IT-MD agreement, the first larger-scale initiative on this issue, could serve as model. EU MS could amend their legislation to ensure that circular migration does not fall under the same, often restrictive, rules of long-term residency and the PL scheme could be replicated elsewhere. The EUI stressed that devising targeted circular migration schemes may often not be necessary. Given opportunities for mobility, circularity often happens ‘naturally’ under temporary migration schemes, as the Polish registration system proves. A welcome innovation would be to have **multilateral schemes**, where MD citizens could work in range of countries for a limited time per year (including seasonal work), which would allow for the portability of rights and social security benefits between all participating countries.

The EC stressed the need to continue to develop the **labour market** in MD in order for it to be able to reintegrate the returning migrants.

II/B/7: Asylum and international protection

Overview of developments

There does not appear to be a specific trend in the persons seeking asylum in MD. From 2007 to 2011, MD authorities registered 75, 57, 50, 90 and 60 **applications for asylum** (a total of 332 persons). Almost one third of these individuals were granted refugee status (9 — around 3% of those requesting asylum) or humanitarian protection (97 — around 29% of those requesting asylum). 237 (i.e. around 70%) applications were rejected.⁴⁴ To compare, in the EU, in 2008-2011, on average about 30% of applications resulted in some form of protection being granted.⁴⁵

The EU High-Level Policy Adviser to the MD MoI Bureau for Migration and Asylum cited the relatively low number of asylum applications that has enabled MD MoI (BMA /Refugee Directorate) to take full advantage of the capacity-building measures made available to them.

Under the MP, several EU MS have provided assistance to MD authorities to improve their asylum system. RO, DE, SK, HU and SI all sponsored some form of exchange between their

⁴⁴ In the years 2007-2011, 20, 20, 12, 25 and 20 people were granted humanitarian protection or statelessness status. 41, 53, 34, 35 and 74 applications were refused. The numbers do not entirely tally, as there is a gap between the time applications and decisions are made.

⁴⁵ Estimated calculations based on Eurostat data, tables migr_asydcfsta, migr_asydcfina and migr_asyappctza.

and MD experts (partly funded through TAIEX), with a total budget of approximately €120 000. Components of the project implemented by the ICMPD and funded by the EC on 'Building training and analytical capacities on migration in Moldova and Georgia (GOVAC)', which has a total budget of €1 226 000, also aim to strengthen the MD asylum system. Several major projects were implemented by UNHCR and funded by the UNHCR and the EC. Outside of the MP, considerable support was given to set up the Regional Protection Programme and the Local Integration Project. The total budget of these activities from 2009-2011 (for MD only) was approximately €1 million.

The MD authorities have been active in the **regulatory sphere**. In 2008, a law on asylum was adopted.⁴⁶ In 2011, the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum,⁴⁷ the corresponding action plan⁴⁸ for implementation and a law on the integration of foreigners were approved.⁴⁹ The MD authorities indicate, however, that these regulatory acts were not drafted as part of the MP, with the exception of the guidelines for the post of eligibility counsellor, which were adopted in 2010.

Assessment and recommendations

All of the 6 (out of 13) institutional respondents who answered this question gave a positive assessment of the **progress made by MD authorities in handling asylum applications and providing asylum and humanitarian protection**. They consider the MP to have had an important influence on these developments. UNHCR sees the MD legislation as exemplary in the region. The EU MS that offered training courses and exchange missions highlight the usefulness of these missions, and the fruitful exchange with the MD counterparts. UNHCR, however, would like to see the Refugee Directorate regain its role as the central, civilian-led body fully responsible for processing asylum requests and first instance decision-making.

Respondents (both from EU MS and MD authorities) are univocal in encouraging the **continuation of training/exchange activities in the future**, not least to help implement the new legislation in MD. The MD Ministry of Interior suggests concluding inter-institutional agreements with EU MS authorities, and developing twinning projects in the area of asylum. UNHCR suggests a broad range of measures to strengthen the MD asylum system. The organisation suggests making MD asylum legislation, in particular regarding the issues of *non-refoulement* and exclusion, fully compliant with the 1951 Refugee Convention; setting up an inter-ministerial mechanism to coordinate the integration of refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection (MD authorities should strive to provide funding for these integration measures themselves to become independent of external funding sources); making available financial assistance for the most vulnerable refugees (old and sick persons, single parent families, unaccompanied minors); issuing Convention Travel Documents (CTDs) for refugees and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection in line with international standards; and lowering the residency requirement for citizenship for refugees

⁴⁶ Law No 270-XVI of 18 December 2008 on Asylum in the Republic of Moldova.

⁴⁷ National Strategy on Migration and Asylum (2011-2020) adopted by the GD No 655 of 8 September 2011.

⁴⁸ Action plan for 2011-2015 for the implementation of the National Strategy on Migration and Asylum, approved by the GD No 1009 of 26 December 2011.

⁴⁹ Law No 274 of 27 December 2011 on the Integration of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova.

and beneficiaries of humanitarian protection from the current requirement of eight years of legal and habitual residence.

According to the EU High-Level Policy Adviser to the MD MoI Bureau for Migration and Asylum, despite valuable progress, the quality of the **procedure for determining refugee status** in MD still requires improvement. This could be achieved through on-the job **training** of staff on interviewing techniques and drafting quality decisions. The Directorate on Refugees recently took up the new responsibility of granting stateless status in accordance with the recently ratified two UN Stateless Conventions and will require capacity building. Although it does not explicitly refer to stateless persons, the MP may be the appropriate cooperation platform to build capacity to address this new challenge for MIA/BMA.

Integrating refugees in Moldova is still a major challenge and it will require more support. The MoI BMA is currently working on a strategy to implement the law on the integration of foreigners. Implementing this law will require further assistance from donors, according to the EU High Level Policy Adviser to the MD MoI Bureau for Migration and Asylum. It is remarkable that, except for UNHCR itself, none of the respondents made reference to this organisation's activities, despite them being the most financially significant in this field. This demonstrates that the UNHCR is only marginally integrated in the MP.⁵⁰ With the new GAMM envisioning international protection as the fourth area of action, the involvement of UNHCR in implementing the MP could be strengthened.

II/B/8: Better informing (potential) migrants

Overview of developments

As there are no direct indicators to track this topic, it is hard to establish with any certainty the extent to which (potential) migrants are informed about migration policies in Moldova and the EU, opportunities for legal migration to the EU, options for return to Moldova and risks of undocumented migration and work. Some insights were provided by the study 'Living and working legally in the European Union' carried out in 2011 under the EU-funded project 'Strengthening Moldova's capacity to manage labour and return migration' in collaboration with the MD National Bureau of Statistics.⁵¹ According to the study, the overall level of information on migration matters has improved somewhat in recent years. According to the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES) and IOM, **dedicated websites** set up with the aim of better informing migrants⁵² receive significant and increasing traffic.⁵³ Traffic on the website www.migratie.md, which is operated with the support of

⁵⁰ Note, however, that the RPPs were designed before the MP, which may also explain why UNHCR is not fully integrated in the MP. Another important issue is the role of the MP vis-à-vis initiatives that either pre-existed or have a broader scope than the MP should have.

⁵¹ The results of the survey can be found at <http://www.legal-in.eu/en/archive/106-migration-tendencies-and-peculiarities-of-moldovans>.

⁵² Examples of websites that provide such information are www.legal-in.eu, www.migratie.md, www.diaspora.md, www.ec.europa.eu/immigration and www.angajat.md, all hosted by different entities.

⁵³ Both organisations supplied numbers, but it is not clear to which of the commonly used site statistics these refer (e.g. hits, sessions, individual page views).

IOM, increased by 40% between 2009 and 2011, for instance. Nevertheless, this data is too sparse and too ambiguous to make reliable inferences.

What is undisputable, however, is that under the umbrella of the MP, EU MS have taken a significant number of initiatives to better inform migrants. CZ and DE provide information about their labour markets and rules of immigration. **Country guides** on legal and labour migration were published in Romanian and a number of these guides were produced and distributed as part of the SPES-led project.⁵⁴ PL, BG, RO and in particular SE have been working closely with the MD National Employment Agency (NEA) to strengthen its capacity to better inform (potential) migrants. The SPES-led project set up a **call centre**, organised several public seminars, distributed information material, organised **job fairs** in DE and IT and held meetings with MD diaspora representatives. PL also organised several intensive **training sessions** and **study visits** as part of the project. GR sponsored an information project which was implemented by IOM in 2008. IOM provided information on legal and irregular migration and return under the EC-funded project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership'. The total estimated budget of these initiatives was €552 000.

Assessment and recommendations

In their assessment, 8 out of the 15 institutional respondents perceive MD migrants to be better informed about migration policies, opportunities for legal migration, options for return and dangers of undocumented migration than in 2008. 7 of these thought that the MP had a strong influence on initiatives (the other respondents did not reply). Of the 11 MD migrant organisations that provided answers to the questionnaire, 6 agreed that MD migrants are better informed of the legal ways of migrating (one neither agreed, nor disagreed), 6 agreed that migrants are better informed of their options for return to MD (5 disagreed) and 7 agreed that migrants are better informed of the dangers of undocumented migration and work (3 strongly disagreed, however).

This assessment of the influence of the MP is only partly shared by MD migrant organisations: 5 saw the MP as having had a 'strong' or 'moderate' influence, but another 6 organisations deemed it to be 'weak' or 'negligible'.

SE highlights that the project implemented by SPES has resulted in a substantial **professionalisation of the MD National Employment Agency**, which now has increased its ability to inform potential and returning migrants. This view is shared by the MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF), which welcomes the increased level of information for migrants on their options for return, but underscores that only the creation of jobs in MD will result in the long-term return of migrants.

IOM, too, perceived a clear improvement in the extent to which migrants are informed, and noted that a range of phenomena support this: the fall in the number of applicants for asylum/refugee status in EU MS; the fall in the number of visa application rejections; the increase in the number of visa applications for family reunifications as a means of

⁵⁴ Country guides were produced for IT, CZ, CY, LT, RO, SE and are available online at <http://www.legal-in.eu/component/content/article/4/25>.

permanent migration (which may correspond to the fall in irregular migrants). However, the organisation deems the MP to have had only a limited effect, as few initiatives focused specifically on information spreading. The EUI noted that the dedicated websites may have had a positive effect, but that the general increase in **access to social media and information networks** has certainly been more important. Information obtained from relatives and friends is still the main source of information for potential migrants, as shown by the results of the research mentioned above.

With regard to better informing potential and actual migrants, DE stresses that migrants should be better informed about the **pre-departure services** offered by MD authorities. IOM suggests disseminating information material directly to MD citizens abroad, and encourages the use of **social media**. SPES also encourages working more closely with the MD diaspora to use it to spread the information. The MD MLSPF would welcome support for centralising labour migration policy in one state institution, which would enhance the MD authorities' capacity to inform (potential) migrants about the opportunities for legal migration, return, the dangers of undocumented migration and work, and to provide services on legal employment abroad.

More efforts should be made to properly inform migrants of the ways to migrate legally, and so help prevent irregular migration. Migrants should be informed directly. The MP partners should also look at how to improve the monitoring of MD citizens' level of information about migration, e.g. by conducting **regular surveys**.

II/B/9: Social protection for migrants and the conclusion of social security benefit transfer agreements

Overview of developments

Nominally, significant progress has been made in enabling MD citizens to transfer social security benefits from MD to a country of destination, or back from a host country to Moldova. **Seven agreements** in this vein have been signed with BG, PT, RO, LU, AT, EE and CZ, all since 2008, i.e. since the MP was launched, and negotiations are underway with PL, BE, LT and HU.

However, although there is great uncertainty about the numbers of migrants living in EU countries, it is clear that the EU MS that have concluded social security benefit transfer agreements with MD host only a limited share (approximately 20%⁵⁵) of potential beneficiaries. The EU MS that host significant numbers of MD citizens (notably IT, UK, ES, FR, DE and LV) have yet to conclude agreements with MD. What is more, the number of citizens benefiting from social security transfers and the amounts transferred has been very limited so far. According to the data presented by the MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF), in 2011 and the first quarter of 2012, 29 BG residents received social security benefits accrued in the Republic of Moldova which were transferred to their

⁵⁵ According to Eurostat data (migr_pop1ctz table, the table lacks data on important recipient countries such as Greece, however), in 2011 there were 188578 MD citizens residing in the EU MS. Of these, 37025 (19.6%) lived in countries with which a social security benefit transfer agreement had been concluded. LU and EE do not report any MD residents.

personal accounts, amounting to MDL 410 485 (€25 965). At the same time, MDL 21 632 (€1 368)⁵⁶ were transferred to the accounts of the National Social Insurance House in favour of two persons who received pensions from BG.

Naturally, related activities under the MP centred on support for the **negotiation of social security benefit transfer agreements**, which the EU MS partner countries financed through their regular budgets. MD negotiators were supported in negotiating agreements through the IOM-implemented and EC-funded project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership'. A sum of €45000 was spent on this work.

Only a minority of institutional respondents provided an assessment of social protection. 8 out of 12 respondents chose not to comment on developments.

The respondents generally gave a positive assessment of the progress made in terms of concluding social security benefit transfer agreements and social protection of migrants. The IOM pointed out that, even though they have yet to result in impressive results, the agreements promise to enhance migrants' social protection in the future.

Assessment and recommendations

The MD MLSPF reported that further negotiations had currently stalled. It felt that this was due to **a lack of resources to cover negotiation costs**, and a **reluctance of some EU MS to engage in negotiations**. On the first point, the authority highlighted its need for more financial assistance.

IOM urged that in order to provide migrants with social protection, health insurance coverage would need to be devised, in particular for **short-term migrants**, as they otherwise lack coverage both in Moldova and in the countries of destination. It is also proposed that potential circular migration schemes include the provision that a part of the earned income be deposited in special accounts and released upon return to Moldova. Apart from being a strong return incentive, this measure could boost savings for retiring/investment purposes. Similarly, the EUI advocates for **the export of benefits and portability of rights under a multilateral scheme**. Such schemes would involve several EU MS that collectively grant more mobility to MD citizens under a common framework, and would allow MD migrants to take with them social security benefits when moving.

A clear majority of MD migrant organisations emphasised the continued difficulties in transferring social security benefits and encouraged the MD authorities to take action on this. In particular, information about the National Social Insurance House should be provided and options to facilitate access to the institution should be explored.

It is worrying that the issue of social protection for migrants, which is very important to MD authorities, non-state respondents and the MD migrant organisations, receives relatively little attention by some EU MS that host significant populations of MD migrants. They should consider negotiating social security benefit transfer agreements with MD. It is important to ensure that agreements are implemented in a way that allows more migrants to benefit from them.

⁵⁶ Exchange rate as of 20 April 2012.

II/B/10: Children and the elderly left behind/without care due to migration

Overview of developments

The phenomenon of **children left behind** in MD due to one or both parents migrating abroad continues to rise to worrying levels. The numbers provided by different MD authorities and IOM vary considerably, which may be due to different definitions used.⁵⁷ However, even the more conservative estimates provided by the MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family are very significant. According to the ministry, in 2009, 36930 children were left behind by one parent and 17656 children were left by both parents, representing 4.7% and 2.2% of the MD population aged 0-17 years in that year, respectively. In 2011, the share of children left behind by one parent had increased to 5.1%, and the share of those left behind by both parents had remained constant at 2.2%. Of all children left behind, in 2011, 116, or 0.2% received assistance (including through the MD National Referral System), up from 0% in 2009.⁵⁸ Several respondents stressed that these figures may well underestimate the phenomenon, as they only include children officially registered as being left behind. It should be stressed, however, that collection of data on this phenomenon only began in 2009.

As for the **elderly left behind**, few figures are available to quantify the phenomenon. The MD National Bureau of Statistics published the number of recipients of social assistance who either classify as elderly left behind, or as unable to work (no disaggregate figures are available). In 2007, this was 25800, and in 2011, 25600. In 2011, 14 elderly persons received assistance under the MD National Referral System, which also assists children left behind and victims of trafficking.

Among the EU MS, CZ and IT have assisted the MD authorities in addressing the phenomenon of children left behind. CZ granted support to the MD National Action Plan on the protection of children left without parental care as a consequence of migration. Italy, in collaboration with the IOM, carried out the project 'Addressing the negative effects of migration on minors and families left-behind', which was co-funded by the EC. Further work has been carried out by the IOM under the EC-funded project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership'. Taken together, these initiatives have a budget of around €2.4 million. Support for the National Referral System was also granted from countries not participating in the MP, notably from CH. The MD authorities have launched a number of initiatives to cushion the consequences for children whose parents are abroad for work. Assistance is provided by

⁵⁷Two different definitions of 'children left behind' seem to be circulating, the first one, 'children left (in the country) without parental care as a result of parents leaving to work abroad' is used by the MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and is based on the MD Family Code, approved by Law No 1316-XVI of 26 October 2000. The other, 'children who do not move but are left behind by one or both parents who have migrated and have been out of the country for 3 months or more' was recently given by the State University of Moldova to reflect more closely the particularities of Moldovan migration patterns. This definition is used by the MD Ministry of Education and IOM, who also submitted figures.

⁵⁸ According to the MD Ministry of education, the corresponding numbers were as follows: 2009 — number children left behind by one parent: 54592, representing 6.9% of the 0-17 years old; children left behind by both parents: 20447, representing 2.6%. In 2011 — number children left behind by one parent: 56239, representing 7.5% of 0-17 years old; children left behind by both parents: 20219, representing 2.7%.

school psychologists, there is support to help children get involved in community activities, and efforts have been made to address the phenomenon more efficiently through the National Referral System. The MD State University has conducted **qualitative research** on the situation of children left behind, which is soon to be supplemented with a quantitative study. The study will provide detailed data on the phenomenon to support the MD authorities' efforts to curb this problem. The respondents did not mention any initiatives targeting specifically the needs of the elderly left behind. In the **regulatory sphere**, an Action Plan on the protection of children left without parental care was adopted in 2010.

Assessment and recommendations

Only one of the EU MS (1/10) gave a (positive) assessment as to whether the needs of those negatively affected by migration have been better addressed since 2008. The four MD authorities and non-state respondents also gave a positive assessment of the progress made. But the MD diaspora organisations gave a rather negative assessment. 5 out of 11 were of the opinion that the situation of children and elderly left behind has not improved, one saw improvements, and 5 stated no clear opinion.

According to the MD State University, the MP has helped to bring the phenomenon of children left behind to the attention of NGOs and policy makers, a view shared by IOM. However, a more thorough analysis of the needs of MD authorities in helping these vulnerable persons is needed. The MD authorities in turn will need support from private and public partners.

IOM notes that **extending the National Referral System** to the whole territory of MD has made it easier to assist those negatively affected by migrating relatives, although the numbers of those assisted remain rather small.

Several respondents urged that the ongoing activities be continued in the future, although the measures need to be based on a comprehensive assessment of the situation to further increase the efficiency of the response. Raising the awareness of the MD population about the negative consequences of migration is a priority for more than one respondent. The MD State University points to recent developments for which there is little knowledge available but that will need attention in the future: first, more and more migrants are settling outside MD and take their children to live with them abroad through 'family reunification' measures. This involves risks for the children, in particular where parents are divorced or live separately. Second, students who had previously been 'left behind' by their parents are increasingly leaving straight after finishing their studies to join their parents abroad, contributing to the brain drain from MD.

One EU MS and the EUI point out that a real solution to the problem would be to increase **options for mobility** (e.g. through visa liberalisation and circular migration for MD citizens). This would make it possible for families to more flexibly spend time together to maintain their family integrity.

On the issue of children left behind, the MP has helped to move **the issue higher up the agenda** of the EU and Moldova's other international development partners, following the Moldovan Government's increased attention to it. However, the positive assessments of high-level progress made should not gloss over the fact that the situation on the ground

seems to have stagnated or even worsened in recent years, as the statistics cited in the beginning appear to show.⁵⁹ What is more, besides an MLSPF-led IOM/CzDA/UNFPA assessment of the situation, the needs of the elderly left behind by migrating relatives have been left virtually unaddressed so far in terms of active measures. Given the scope of the problem of family members left behind, **more structural and comprehensive solutions**, as suggested by some of the respondents, should be supported by initiatives as a more realistic response than immediate temporary assistance to vulnerable groups and support offered through stand-alone projects. First, structural responses have been initiated by the MLSPF and non-governmental actors to establish the real scale of the phenomenon and quantify individual levels of deprivation. But system-wide adoption of support measures to meet the needs will require further coordinated support and action before measures take effect.

II/B/11: Facilitation of short-term mobility

Overview of developments

Since 2008, the process of facilitating short-term mobility (up to three months) between the EU and MD has been based on the **agreement on the facilitation of the issuance of visas** between the European Community and the Republic of Moldova, which entered into force on 1 January 2008. Another important development was the opening of the **Common Visa Application Centre (CVAC)** in 2007. As of 2011, the CVAC processes visa applications for DK, AT, SI, EE, LV, HU, SE, BE, FI, NL, GR, HR, CH, SK and LU. The re-negotiation of the visa facilitation agreement is now complete and the agreement was signed in June 2012. The following analysis of developments in the field of short-term mobility is limited by the inconsistency of available data. It is based on numbers of applications to the CVAC and major destination countries such as CZ, FR, PL, DE and the non-Schengen countries RO and BG, but excludes IT,⁶⁰ which presumably processes important numbers of visa applications from MD citizens.

According to the available figures, between 2008 and 2010 the number of visa applications for Schengen countries rose from **34 332 to 49 088 applications**.⁶¹ Rejection rates vary widely between different EU MS and different time periods. For instance, the share of rejected applications for one authority could vary between 21% in 2008 and 7% in 2011. In 2011, rejection rates between the different EU MS authorities issuing visas varied between 5.6% in one place and 15.4% in another. Overall, for those Schengen authorities that provided figures, between 2008 and 2011 average rejection rates went down, from 13.5% in 2008 to 10.3% in 2011.⁶² The *de facto* average time⁶³ between a visa application by an MD

⁵⁹ Mere better data collection on the phenomenon as a result to increased attention to it, does not necessarily mean that there is more such children — but just that they are better counted. So the respective statistical data would need to be taken with caution when looking into the trends of the phenomenon.

⁶⁰ The Embassy of Italy was opened in Chisinau in October 2009.

⁶¹ In 2009, the number of visa applications to the abovementioned (Schengen) authorities was 33 921. In 2011 it was 45 504.

⁶² The precise rejection rates for Schengen countries were as follows 2008: 13.45%, 2009: 14.83%, 2010: 11.59% and 2011: 10.27%.

⁶³ Under the Visa Facilitation Agreement applications are to be processed within 10 days.

citizen and the decision whether the visa is granted by a Schengen authority was reduced from 7-10 days to 5-7 days.

However, the most important destination countries for short-term stays of MD citizens were the non-Schengen EU MS, RO and BG. For RO, the number of visa applications has varied between 75 866 in 2009 and 121 376 in 2010, while rejection rates have continuously gone up: from 1.3 % in 2008 to 7.2 % in 2011.⁶⁴ The number of visa applications for BG increased: from 22 106 in 2008, to 51 612 in 2011; at the same time, the already low rejection rates further declined from 0.8 % in 2008 to 0.3 % in 2011.⁶⁵

In terms of initiatives fostering short-term mobility, IT organised a study visit to MD in 2010. In 2012, BG is to take on more embassy staff in order to speed up the visa application process. Since 2011, the ICMPD has been implementing the project entitled 'Support to the implementation of the EC visa facilitation and readmission agreements (ReVis)' with a total budget of about € 1, 032.000.⁶⁶

In the regulatory sphere, the major EU-MD initiative was the launch of the **renegotiation of the visa facilitation agreement**, which was signed in June 2012. On 15 June 2010, the EU-Moldova Visa Dialogue was initiated and an Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation subsequently endorsed. Outside the MP, another important development in the field of short-term mobility was the entry into force of the treaty on local border traffic between RO and MD.⁶⁷

It is important to note that the cost of a Schengen visa remains very high for MD citizens, if seen in the light of MD average incomes. In 2010, for instance, the €35 for a visa constituted roughly 34 % of the average monthly income in MD.⁶⁸

Assessment and recommendations

In their assessment, 5 out of 11 EU MS stated that short-term mobility had been promoted since 2008, while the other EU MS and the MD authorities chose not to comment. The view of MD diaspora organisations on this issue is divided: 4 of them see improved options for short-term mobility, 4 disagree and one disagrees strongly with this view. One EU MS points out that the figures for visa applications and visas issued must be interpreted in the light of citizenship being granted to MD citizens by RO, which eliminates the need for a visa for those individuals. Moreover, many MD citizens may be unaware that it is relatively easy to apply for an EU MS visa.

⁶⁴ In 2008, the number of visa applications to RO authorities was 118480. In 2011, it was 81832. The precise rejection rates for RO were as follows 2008: 1.27%, 2009: 4.52%, 2010: 6.93% and 2011: 7.21%.

⁶⁵ In 2009 the number of visa applications to BG authorities was 32777. In 2010 it was 41648. The precise rejection rates for BG were as follows 2008: 0.75%, 2009: 0.51%, 2010: 0.43% and 2011: 0.30%.

⁶⁶ Parts of this budget are earmarked for facilitating the implementation of readmission agreements, however, and the projects equally benefits GE.

⁶⁷ Signed on 13 November 2009 in Bucharest.

⁶⁸ According to data from the World Bank, average GDP per capita in MD in 2010 was 1 631 US\$ (current US\$)/1 231€ (presumed exchange rate 07551 US\$/€). 35 € in 2010 thus constituted roughly 34% of average MD monthly income (103 €).

With an eye to the future, it is hence suggested to **give MD citizens better information about how to obtain a visa**. One MS suggests that the EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova and the activities of the project ‘Consolidation of migration management capacities in the Republic of Moldova’⁶⁹ will provide opportunities for further improvements in this area.

II/B/12: Prevention of ‘brain drain’

Overview of developments

It is still difficult to quantify the extent of ‘brain drain’ from Moldova because of the **lack of regular statistical recording**, for instance of the skill profile of migrants. Survey data on the issue was collected by ETF in 2008. This data shows that between 2000 and 2008, ‘brain drain’ had been on the rise, with a higher share of migrants with tertiary education leaving the country (their share rose from around 8% to 12% of all migrants).⁷⁰ Unfortunately, updated data is not available.

In mid-2010, the MD National Employment Agency (NEA) started to chart the employment status of migrants returning to MD. The NEA states that in 2011, 813 returned persons were registered as unemployed, while it remains unclear how many returnees had a job offer upon arrival or were reintegrated professionally. Figures supplied by the IOM on its voluntary return and integration programme show that the numbers of those who were reintegrated (employed after return) were on the rise (from 27 in 2007 to 94 in 2011), but remain on a moderate level. In this context, one EU MS remarks that voluntary return programmes do not primarily serve to address ‘brain drain’ but rather aim at irregular migrants staying in EU MS.⁷¹

Few activities were carried out by EU MS in the context of the MP to address ‘brain drain’. Exceptions were the **study visits** organised by RO and PL, the CZ **programme of voluntary return of legally residing migrants**, and the **returning experts programme** run by DE. Under the latter programme, five experts returned to MD and job fairs were organised in DE to inform MD citizens about job opportunities in MD. Some of the activities under the EC-funded initiative ‘Strengthening Moldova’s capacity to manage labour and return migration’ aim at preventing ‘brain drain’, but the gist of the initiative is to prevent ‘brain waste’ as discussed in the next section. The MD government has initiated PARE 1+1, a programme in which investments of (returning) migrants are matched 1 to 1 by government funds. The total amount of funds which are planned to be allocated from the state budget during 2010-2012 for this programme amount to MDL 21.17 million (€1.4 million) and MDL 13.66 million (€ 0.91 million) have already been invested. The IOM also offers support for this pilot initiative through the EC funded project SIMP (see below).

⁶⁹ Referred to in the Commission Implementing Decision of 17 November 2011 on the Annual Action Programme 2011 (Part 2) for the Thematic Programme of Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum.

⁷⁰ ETF (European Training Foundation), *Black Sea Labour Market Reviews: Moldova Country Report* (Torino: ETF, 2009); ETF (European Training Foundation), *HCD Review: Relationship Between Human Capital Development and Equity in the Republic of Moldova* (Torino: ETF, 2011).

⁷¹ Several EU MS report having supported the reintegration of migrants found to be staying illegally on their territory.

In 2008, the Government launched the national economic empowerment programme for youth, which aims to **equip young people with entrepreneurial skills** and help them set up their own businesses in rural areas offering commercial loans with a 40% grant amount. The programme's budget for 2008-2011 was MDL 202 million (€13.5 million).⁷² For 2012 there are plans to set aside another MDL 82, 5 million including 33 million (around €2.1 million) offered by the EC to the empowerment programme.

The MD authorities have also worked on improving the **vocational education and training system** and the **skills and qualification recognition system** in cooperation with the ETF. The IOM-implemented SIMP project helped the MD Government to initiate pilot schemes for fostering the temporary return and professional placement of Moldovan graduates of foreign universities and foster the temporary return of expatriated Moldovan researchers and scientists. The activities of the project encouraged the (permanent) return of Moldovan graduates from universities abroad, thus promoting the circulation of innovative ideas and processes and successfully worked to support the identification of leading Moldovan diaspora scientists who would be able to undertake a temporary assignment in Moldova at a local research/academic institution.

In the regulatory sphere, in 2010 MD adopted the previously mentioned national strategy on migration and asylum and a corresponding action plan, which includes the objective of reducing 'brain drain'. Action plans have been devised by the MD authorities to stimulate return and to support the MD diaspora. MD concluded agreements with PL and RO, respectively, on the exchange of information and collaboration in the field of education and health.

Assessment and recommendations

In their assessment, one third (4 out of 12) of institutional respondents acknowledged a reduction in the 'brain drain' from MD, while others chose not to comment. IOM points out that the return of even small numbers of experts can have a symbolic function and may encourage others to follow the example. The majority of MD migrant organisations (6 out of 11 respondents, others expressed no clear opinion) state that in their view the brain drain continues unchecked. The EUI highlights the **lack of data**, which makes it impossible to assess the phenomenon, and suggests conducting dedicated surveys and research, in both the countries of origin and the countries of destination, on the basis of which specific policies could be designed.

A few EU MS respondents see **structural changes in the MD economy** as the only feasible way to reduce 'brain drain' from MD. One EU MS suggests focusing on the development of the labour market through improvements to the vocational education and training system, the skills and qualifications recognition system, and the dialogue between the social partners. It is also suggested to simplify existing labour legislation and then to focus on the implementation of the simplified rules, to develop cooperation between the NEA and private employment agencies and to conclude bilateral agreements on labour migration.

Several non-state respondents are in favour of addressing 'brain drain' by encouraging investments in the MD economy. Specifically, it is proposed to create research parks that could include business incubators and could benefit from tax breaks and investment protection guarantees. It is only these kinds of opportunities that would offer well-educated

⁷² http://www.mf.gov.md/common/istitutii/DLC/PNAET/25.01.2012/Raport_31.12.2011_PNAET.doc.

young MD citizens a reason to stay, and might attract those who already emigrated to return to MD.

In terms of projects, two respondents suggest continuing and expanding expert return programmes.

In fact, it is not clear to what extent 'brain drain' affects MD.⁷³ It is therefore surprising for claims to be made that the phenomenon has been prevented. **Pilot Initiatives** have been implemented, although only on a **small scale**. It also becomes apparent that little has been done in practical terms to understand the concept of 'brain drain' properly and address it. Measures to reverse or prevent 'brain drain' would have to go well **beyond the sphere of migration policies**; a strategy would have to include initiatives to foster investment and growth in MD. In this context, the partners should clarify if they want to pursue this type of activity under the MP. In that case, it should also be considered to have other national and international actors from the realm of economics more strongly involved (such as the MD Ministry of Economy, the MD National Bank or the World Bank) in the MP.⁷⁴ Otherwise they should consider formulating **less ambitious goals** for this and future MPs.

Related to the 'brain drain' phenomenon is the issue that employees of MD national authorities regularly change jobs to join **international organisations** working in MD, not least because of big differences in wages. The resulting high turnover in staff is detrimental to capacity building efforts — in the fields covered by the MP and beyond — and needs to be addressed urgently.

II/B/13: Prevention of 'brain waste'

Overview of developments

As in the case of 'brain drain', **there is little systematically collected information available** that could serve to quantify the phenomenon of 'brain waste', i.e. migrants' inability to put to good use their previously acquired skills and qualifications during migration and on their return.⁷⁵ However, the abovementioned reports by ETF clearly show that, at least until 2008, 'brain waste' was the rule rather than the exception among MD migrants. The majority of migrants, including those with high levels of formal education, were employed in the low-skill sector abroad, **not making use of their skills or even losing them**.⁷⁶ For the evaluation, EU MS were asked for the number of qualifications as nurse or doctor obtained in MD that they had recognised, or had considered for recognition, since 2007.⁷⁷ However, with three exceptions, EU MS did not or were not in a position to indicate these numbers. The major

⁷³ The new WHO-led project 'Better managing the mobility of health professionals in the Republic of Moldova' is set to provide figures on the phenomenon of health professionals' mobility.

⁷⁴ As has been stated above, the World Bank office in Chisinau is not very much involved in activities within the MP.

⁷⁵ It should be noted that migration itself can be seen as a strategy for preventing 'brain waste' at home — should no employment corresponding to the level of education be found domestically.

⁷⁶ ETF (European Training Foundation) 2009; ETF (European Training Foundation) 2011.

⁷⁷ These figures were to serve as a rough estimate of the extent of 'brain waste' in these professions and it was agreed upon in the EU Task Force Meeting by the EU MS that the evaluation would focus on these groups. However, as there are no figures for the total number of trained nurses and doctors leaving MD, the shares cannot be estimated here.

exception is RO, which in 2011 had examined 847 diplomas of nurses or doctors with a view their recognition, and recognised 797.⁷⁸ SE and PL indicate that they recognised a small number (less than 10 in all) qualifications of nurses and doctors obtained in MD since 2007.⁷⁹

The project ‘Strengthening Moldova’s capacity to manage labour and return migration’, funded by the EC and implemented through the Swedish Employment Service in collaboration with a number of EU MS and the European Training Foundation (ETF), is the major initiative to address and prevent ‘brain waste’ within the MP. It has a budget of €3.2 million and has been running since 2009. A core objective of the project is to establish a **system of skills validation for returning migrants**. Apart from this flagship initiative, no initiatives of EU MS have been reported.

The MD Action Plan on Migration and Asylum emphasises the **promotion of recognition of migrants’ skills and qualifications** as an important objective of the MD government in the field. Work has been ongoing on establishing **occupational standards** for various professions with the aim of improving the VET system in cooperation with the ETF and the ILO. An initial four occupational standards were approved in 2011. A methodology for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is currently being prepared. Likewise, the MD Ministry of Education is preparing **draft agreements on the recognition of qualifications** that MD intends to conclude with EU MS on a bilateral basis from 2013 onwards.

Assessment and recommendations

With regard to assessing whether progress has been made in preventing ‘brain waste’ in the context of the MP, SE cautions that such an assessment would be premature as the results of the abovementioned project are only now about to materialise. Probably as a result of this, the lack of data in the field on the one hand and the lack of initiatives on the other, none of the 12 institutional respondents see ‘brain waste’ as having been prevented.⁸⁰ Among diaspora organisations, 6 out of 11 ‘strongly disagree’ with the statement that ‘brain waste’ has been prevented since 2008.⁸¹ However, one MD authority (Ministry of Education) highlights that it was the MP that gave the impulse to addressing questions of validation of non-formal and informal learning, recognition of skills and competences and occupational standards.

For one EU MS, the way forward for preventing ‘brain waste’ lies in creating **more transparency** with regard to the content of MD qualifications, to the skills acquired in EU labour markets, and to where in the MD labour market these are needed. This EU MS is also in favour of investing in **capacity building for labour market matching** and **strengthening cooperation between MD ministries and the social partners**. DE mentions that from April 2012 on it should be easier for MD citizens to have their qualifications recognised in DE

⁷⁸ In previous years, these numbers had been as follows: considered for recognition: 2007-1116; 2008-1313, 2009-655; 2010-611; diplomas recognised: 2007-1004; 2008-1207; 2009-583; 2010-554.

⁷⁹ However, neither RO, SE nor PL provided numbers as to how many nurses and doctors from MD applied to have their qualifications recognised.

⁸⁰ Nine out of 12 institutional respondents chose not to answer the assessment question concerning ‘brain waste’. The other three chose ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

⁸¹ One more organisation ‘disagrees’ with the statement, three ‘neither agree nor disagree’, and one ‘agrees’.

because of changes in the laws of the country.⁸² The EUI suggests establishing a **clearing house** for MD qualifications in which all EU MS would participate.

For its future agenda, the MD Ministry of Education (MoE) undertakes to foster the dialogue between VET and higher education institutions, to introduce entrepreneurship studies at all levels of education, to adjust the education system to the needs of the labour market, to attract private investments in higher education and VET, to increase staff numbers in education, to improve facilities and to align the quality of education with European standards. Organising information campaigns and raising awareness to create trust around the validation system are considered to be of great importance. According to the MD MoE, the 'Activity Programme European Integration — Freedom, Democracy and Welfare 2011-2014' and the National Development Strategy Moldova 2020 are therefore planning activities in this respect.

II/B/14: Exchange of students and researchers

Overview of developments

The available figures point to an increase in academic exchanges between MD and EU MS, although the figures are difficult to interpret in the light of the accession of RO to the EU, whose education sector traditionally has very close links to that of MD.

According to the MD MoE, the number of MD citizens living in the EU for study purposes increased sharply in recent years, from **2 417 in 2010** to **3 603 in 2011** (an increase of 49%). Previously, it had been 108 students in 2008 and 6 in 2007 who went to study in the EU via the programmes monitored by the MDMoE. However, these figures do not include students who applied for the scholarships individually. As regards **academic exchanges** on the basis of bilateral agreements in the field of education with RO, there were 2959 beneficiaries in 2011, 3515 in 2010 and 2 000 for each year in the period of 2007-2009.

There has also been an increase in students who benefit from ERASMUS Mundus scholarships (from 60 in 2007 to 173 in 2010). The number of EU students in MD more than doubled between 2008 and 2009, and has since declined slightly.⁸³

Exchange of researchers proceeds on the basis of bilateral agreements between MD and RO, PL, CZ, and HU, respectively. In total, in 2011 20 researchers from MD stayed in EU countries for short-term (5-7 days) stays, while 19 researchers from EU MS benefited from such stays. These figures point to a slight decline in relation to 2007, when 23 researchers travelled in each direction respectively.

⁸² DE states that 'the 'Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act', or so-called 'Recognition Act,' comes into effect on 1 April 2012. The new law will establish a nationally standardised system of assessing foreign professional qualifications in a way which can be easily understood by applicants as well as by employers and businesses.

⁸³ According to the MD authorities, the number of EU citizens studying in MD developed as follows: 2008: 230, 2009: 504, 2010:593, 2011: 463). However, in the assessment part, the MD Ministry of Education states that incoming students actually outnumber outgoing students. It is not clear whether the Ministry is referring only to students from EU MS here.

Within the MP, a limited number of projects have been devised to foster the exchange of students and researchers. The project 'The phenomenon of brain drain: an approach for consolidation of the Republic of Moldova as a platform for research and development' was conducted by the Moldovan Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the IOM. Within this project, Moldovan researchers employed abroad offer expertise to MD organisations, among other things. DE included MD in its returning experts' programme, which facilitated the return of two experts. However, the main activities in this field take place, and the main financial commitments are made, outside the frame of the MP in the form of bilateral agreements and EU support to MD through the Tempus programme.⁸⁴

Also outside the framework of the MP, bilateral agreements on cooperation in the field of education have been signed between MD and RO, CZ, EE, SW, DE, BG and AT, which aim at fostering exchange and strengthening MD academia. In 2011, the MD authorities adopted the Law on the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS III) and began its implementation. Jointly with other partners, the MD Academy of Sciences was involved in EU-supported programmes, particularly those financed under the 7th Framework Programme for Research).

Assessment and recommendations

The request to assess progress made with regard to the exchange of students and researchers met with little response. Only 3 out of 13 institutional respondents voiced an opinion. Those who did respond noted an increase in the options for exchange of students and researchers since 2008. This impression is shared by a majority of the diaspora organisations (6/11), some of them (4/11) attribute it directly to the MP. One MS attributes the increase in academic mobility to the **growing variety of mobility programmes** for which MD is eligible, **greater transparency**, and the **comparability and compatibility of national education programmes and systems**. However, according to the EUI, the challenge is not the lack of opportunities for studies, but the **difficulty of obtaining a Schengen visa (preventing MD citizens from attending conferences)** and of obtaining a national visa to pursue degree studies in the EU.

With a view to the future, the MD Academy of Sciences encourages the creation of a permanent fund to finance initiatives aiming to involve the MD scientific diaspora in academic development in MD. The MD Ministry of Education wishes to sign agreements on the recognition of diplomas, academic degrees, qualifications and competences, especially with those EU MS that host a large number of MD citizens (IT, PT, FR, GR). As the Mobility Partnership does not provide for a differential approach to academic mobility and does not envisage distinct initiatives in this respect, the MD MoE stresses its particular interest in developing some bilateral or multilateral initiatives that would promote and facilitate academic mobility with the EU MS, especially with HU, GR, SI and PT.

All this shows that there does not seem to be enough data (or at least that it is difficult to collect data) to carry out proper monitoring of any progress made in the field of exchange of students, in particular. Given the limited initiatives registered in this field, there are still **doubts as to what extent the activities under the Mobility Partnership contribute to fostering the exchange of students and researchers**.

⁸⁴ Through the Tempus programme, MD has received since 1995 around €13 million in support. From 2007 to 2011 RO spent around €23 million on scholarships for MD citizens to study in RO.

II/B/15: Development impact of remittances

Overview of developments

According to studies published in 2008⁸⁵ and 2010,⁸⁶ remittances form a **very important source of income** for MD citizens; in 2008, estimated remittances amounted to US\$1.9 billion, corresponding to 31% of MD's GDP.⁸⁷ Remittances are most often used to help a migrant's spouse, children and parents cope with their daily needs and improve their basic living conditions. Over 50% of those asked cited this as the most important motivation for sending remittances. Remittances are also used for savings and investments. According to the MD National Bureau of Statistics, households that receive remittances have a substantially higher average income than households that do not receive remittances. In 2010, for instance, a person in a non-remittance-receiving household had an average monthly income of 1195 MDL/72€, while a person in a remittance-receiving household had an average monthly income that was about 25% higher (1492 MDL/€89).⁸⁸

Between 2008 and 2010, both remittance- and non-remittance-receiving households spent a similar share of their income on **health and education**, expenses presumed to be beneficial for development. The average shares were 5.7% on health and 0.6% on education for remittance-receiving household, and 6.0% on health and 0.5% on education for non-remittance-receiving households.⁸⁹ In both cases, these shares have risen over the last two years. In line with the higher average income, total expenditures on health and on education thus remained proportionally higher for remittance-receiving households.

The share of MD migrants who remit through **official channels** seems to be rising steadily. It is widely assumed that it is best for development purposes if remittances are transferred through the official banking system, as the remittances are then available to be used for investments by other players. According to the above-cited study, in 2008 the share of migrants to EU countries remitting through official channels stood at around 70%, up from around 55% in 2006, and may have further risen since then. However, most (35%) of remittance beneficiaries received their money through **Money Transfer Operators**, and not through the banking system (their share stood at 22%). According to the National Bank of MD, in all, 26 rapid-money-transfer providers were active in MD in 2011. Transfer fees were

⁸⁵Luecke, Matthias; Omar Mahmoud, Toman; Steinmayr, Andreas (2009): Labour migration and remittances in Moldova: Is the boom over?: Trends and preliminary findings from the IOM-CBSAXA panel household survey 2006-2008, <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/32525>.

⁸⁶ International Agency for Source Country Information Migration (IASCI), Maximising the Development-Impact of Migration-related Financial Flows and Investment to Moldova, http://www.migration4development.org/sites/m4d.emakina-eu.net/files/iasci_civis_market_analysis_moldova_2010.pdf.

⁸⁷ The MD National Bank publishes figures on 'Transfers in favour of individuals', which, however, cannot be considered equivalent to remittances, as the figure also includes rapid transfers made by, and in favour of, companies.

⁸⁸ In the previous two years this difference had been even more significant. In 2008, a person in a remittance-receiving household had a 31% higher income than a person in a non-remittance-receiving household. In 2009, the difference was 33%.

⁸⁹ According to Eurostat data (table nama_co3_c), in 2010, the responding expenditure shares for EU-27 citizens were 3.6% for health, and 1.4% for education.

lower than in other regions of the world. Nevertheless, carrying money also remains a popular method for remitting money, with 18% of remittance-receiving households indicating that they received money through this channel.

The only initiatives supported by an EU MS with the aim of enhancing the development impact of remittances were DE's the establishment of the **internet platform geldtransfair.de**, which provides comparative information about transfer fees to and from different regions in the world, and **banking training sessions** for MD returnees, also organised by DE. CZ reports that it is considering starting support initiatives in this field.

The major pilot initiative under the MP in this field is the programme **PARE 1+1**, which is implemented by the MD Ministry of Economy in collaboration with the IOM.⁹⁰ Through PARE 1+1, sums invested by migrants or their close relatives are matched 1:1 by state funds, and investors also receive training. Out of the total budget planned for the support of 124 projects in the period 2010-2012, MDL 21.17 million (€1.4 million) and MDL 13.66 million (€ 0.91 million) have already been invested. The grant amount represents MDL 11.85 million (€ 0.79 million).

Assessment and recommendations

Only 2 out of 12 institutional respondents offered a (positive) assessment as to whether the development impact of remittances has been enhanced. Among the migrant organisations, 7 out of 11 state that transferring money has become less costly (while 3 disagree), and 4 out of 11 see the influence of the MP in this regard as significant.

One EU MS suggests working more closely with members of the MD diaspora present in the respective EU MS to encourage them to co-finance investments in MD. The MD Ministry of Economy notes that PARE 1+1, which is still in its pilot phase, is to be evaluated in the course of 2012 and an expansion of the programme will be considered. The IOM also considers that it important to expand the programme. The MD Ministry of Economy also suggests developing **loan guarantee schemes** based on remittances and **long-term securities schemes** for migrant workers, and establishing a dialogue with members of the MD diaspora to inform them about investment opportunities in MD. Inspiration for projects aimed at attracting remittances should be sought by studying examples from other countries. The IOM adds to this by suggesting developing schemes for **real estate investment backed by remittances**, **insurances schemes** for migrant workers and their families and dedicated **saving schemes** for these groups. Initiatives should include attractive interest rates and regulatory guarantees and protection for investments. The National Bank of MD and EUI are in favour of **survey research to trace the impact of remittances** and schemes aimed at enhancing their effectiveness. The EUI points out that the above suggestions would require policy changes beyond the scope of the MP. According to the literature, improving the development impact of remittances belongs to the sphere of 'migration and development' which is actually susceptible to policy interventions. In that light, it is surprising how few initiatives have been launched, and partners should consider whether to become more active in this regard.

⁹⁰ IOM allocated €50000 from the EC-funded project 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership' to activities in this field.

II/B/16: Linking up with the diaspora

Overview of developments

Judging from the limited indicators available, in recent years there have been more opportunities for MD authorities to keep up links with the MD diaspora. In 2007, there were 45 MD diaspora organisations registered with MD consular missions. In 2011, this number had more than tripled and stood at 145. In 2010, the MD authorities also started to offer an option for individual MD citizens living abroad to register with consular missions online. As of 2011, 161 individuals had registered.

The only EU MS initiatives reported in this field were three meetings organised by DE between MD diaspora organisations in DE, the MD Embassy in DE and DE institutions. A range of activities has been undertaken by MD authorities to strengthen links with its citizens abroad. Among other things, the MD Bureau of Interethnic Relations (BIR) is hosting a **web-portal (diapora.md)**⁹¹ that allows diaspora organisations to register and is used as a way of exchanging information. In 2010, the **IV Congress of Moldovan Diaspora** was held in Chisinau. This was followed in 2011 by the conference ‘Culture of tolerance, common values, intercultural dialogue — 20 years of achievements’. The IOM supported the MD government in these activities, by providing training courses to MD consular staff and helping with the development of additional websites. It is conducting an extensive diaspora mapping exercise, which will complement the Extended Migration Profile. The majority of these activities were financed by the EC through the project ‘Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership’. Total expenses in this area amounted to around €175000.

In the regulatory sphere, in 2007 the MD government adopted regulations on financial support meant for activities aimed at preserving the national cultural identity of the MD diaspora,⁹² and an action plan for the protection of its citizens abroad was adopted in 2008.⁹³ In 2011, amendments⁹⁴ to the legislation on the organisation and functioning of the ‘Coordinating Council of Persons Originating from the Republic of Moldova and Residing Abroad’ were adopted,⁹⁵ an ‘Action Plan for national, cultural and social support of people originating from the Republic of Moldova residing abroad’⁹⁶ was approved. In addition, the idea of establishing a new Diaspora Agency was launched. Its legal framework is currently being drawn up by the MD State Chancellery.

⁹¹ The web page www.diaspora.md was launched in August 2011.

⁹² Regulation on financial support meant for activities dealing with preserving the national cultural identity of persons originating from the Republic of Moldova residing abroad (Moldovan diaspora) approved by GD No 1521 of 29 December 2007.

⁹³ National Action Plan to protect the citizens of the Republic of Moldova residing abroad approved by GD No 94 of 4 February 2008.

⁹⁴ These changes also had implications for the title of the council, which was amended from ‘Coordinating Council of Persons Originating from the Republic of Moldova and Residing Abroad’ to ‘Coordinating Council of Persons Originating from the Republic of Moldova — Moldovan diaspora’.

⁹⁵ GD No 834 of 10 November 2011.

⁹⁶ Action Plan of national, cultural and social support to the Moldovan diaspora for 2012-2014, approved by the GD No 237 of 17 April 2012.

Assessment and recommendations

The 3 out of 12 institutional actors providing an assessment as to whether the MD authorities' capacity to keep up links with MD citizens abroad has been enhanced all see positive developments and attribute them, at least partly, to the MP. MD diaspora organisations are complimentary about the liaison initiatives launched by the MD authorities. All rate as 'useful' or 'very useful' the Congress of the Diaspora (held every two years), other meetings with MD officials, meetings at embassies abroad and the web-portals hosted by MD authorities. For the IOM, the capacities of the MD authorities have been greatly enhanced. However, it also notes that the capacities of the diaspora organisations themselves have greatly increased over the last four years.

With a view to the future, DE suggests that, diaspora organisations in DE could receive support for helping the MD authorities to **provide services to their citizens abroad**. MD should receive support for its efforts to link diaspora organisations in different countries. The MD diaspora should be more closely **involved in economic and labour market development in the country**. The MD BIR suggests deploying consular staff specifically trained to liaise with migrants abroad (a suggestion also made by MD diaspora organisations), encouraging embassies to **distribute information more actively** and engage with migrants, strengthening links to second- or third-generation migrants of MD origin and strengthening the **social protection** of migrants by becoming more closely involved with host countries. The IOM is in favour of continuing and expanding ongoing initiatives. The organisation further suggests opening Sunday schools or organising leisure-time programmes for MD children abroad, regular publication of didactic material on MD and its dissemination abroad, and funding awareness-raising **diaspora events** abroad. The MD diaspora organisations suggest holding thematic meetings between its representatives and MD officials, for instance on social protection, remittances, investment opportunities, generally increasing the number of meetings and holding them abroad more regularly. Additional suggestions are to distribute information material more regularly to members of the diaspora, and to work on the online registration tool with a view to setting up personalised profiles.

The comments here are similar to what has been said about remittances. It is widely recognised that strong links between migrants and their country of origin can have beneficial effects. The recently started second phase of the SPES-led project already places a stronger focus on this. However, EU MS might still consider how they could further support MD to keep up links with MD citizens abroad.

II/B/17: Border management

Overview of developments

Over the last few years, border security in MD has been **modernised**, resulting in more **professional border management**. According to the MD Border Guard Service (BGS), the number of border control points equipped with state-of-the-art technology⁹⁷ has risen sharply from 3/40 (7.5%) to 32/40 (80.0%). Between 2009 and 2011, the number of staff members in charge of this equipment, and trained to operate it, rose by 50% to 481 (in 2009 it stood at 320). Moreover, the absolute number of professionally-trained border guards increased from 386 in 2009 to 620 in 2011 (an increase of 61%); in the meantime, their share relative to all personnel deployed to perform border guard duties fluctuated from 18.0 up to 24.2 and down again to 19.0%, mainly due to a 52% increase in the total number of staff members tasked with border guard duties between 2009 (2 145) and 2011 (3 270).⁹⁸

Under the aegis of the **EU Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine — EUBAM**, several information exchange systems between MD and UA have been set up since 2007,⁹⁹ According to both EUBAM and the MD BGS, this has led to very good cooperation between the agencies involved. MD BGS and RO Border Police both operate on the basis of a bilateral agreement. Here, too, cooperation is rated by the MD BGS as excellent.

Among EU MS, DE and CZ granted support within the framework of the MP for capacity building in border management.¹⁰⁰ CZ seconded an expert, and DE organised a series of training sessions and seminars for **exchanging best practice and strengthening the capacity** of the MD BGS. Since 2008, **Frontex** has been collaborating with the MD BGS under a working arrangement.¹⁰¹ The agency has provided extensive training sessions and has facilitated information exchange. It is currently conducting the Common Core Curriculum training course for Border Guards. The activities had a total budget of approximately €144 000. Outside the framework of the MP, there is extensive cooperation on improving border management between the MD authorities in charge of border security and EUBAM, which assisted the MD BGS in the development of the National IBM strategy and related

⁹⁷ Examples of such technology given by the BGS include: readers for the optic deciphering of machine readable zones, video-spectral magnifiers for detecting false and forged documents, photo equipment, video equipment, mini printers, means of conveyance, laptops, computers, video recorders, servers, e-gate etc.

⁹⁸ In 2009, the total number of staff members deployed on border guard duties was 2 145, of which 386 were professionally trained border guards, representing a share of 18%. In 2010, the numbers were as follows: total number of staff members deployed — 2 200; number of professional border guards - 532; share of professionally trained border guards - 24%. In 2011, the total number of staff members deployed was 3 270, the number of professional border guards 620, and the share of professionally trained border guards 19%.

⁹⁹ These are: CBSAR (Common Border Security Assessment Report); OIE (Operational Information Exchange), both operational since 2007; and PAIES (Pre-arrival information exchange system), operational since 2008.

¹⁰⁰ Only capacity-building initiatives in the field of border management are included here. Material/technical support offered in the field of border security is not considered. To give an idea of the relations with regard to EU funding: according to numbers supplied by DG DEVCO, as of early 2012, on-going technical/material support for border management amounted to €13.7 million, while financial support to all initiatives under the MP stood at €11.3 million.

¹⁰¹ Working arrangement on the establishment of operational cooperation between the Border Guards Service of the Republic of Moldova and the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) of 12 August 2008.

action plan, in drafting new border-related legislation and establishing border-management procedures that meet EU standards. On 30 June 2012 EUBAM provided MD BGS with EUBAM's vision of the Border Guard Service of the Republic of Moldova from a 10-year perspective. During the period 2008-2011, EUBAM launched four Joint Border Control Operations at the MD UA border,¹⁰² and ran vocational training sessions for 753 border guards, including sessions on risk analysis, biometric passport checks, trafficking in human beings, IBM, leadership and management and detection of falsified documents.

Collaboration between RO and MD on border issues is expected to improve further as a result of the treaty on the common border regime which was signed in 2010.¹⁰³ With the 'Integrated Border Management Strategy 2011-2013',¹⁰⁴ the 'Law on the State Border',¹⁰⁵ the 'Law on the amending and supplementing of the Contravention Code'¹⁰⁶ and the 'The Law on the Border Police',¹⁰⁷ MD authorities have adopted important legislative acts **bringing the border regime in line with EU common practice**. Within the ICMPD project,¹⁰⁸ the MD BGS benefited from the publication of an updated training manual and development of a distance e-learning tool.

Assessment and recommendations

In all, 3 out of 13 institutional respondents see the MD authorities' capacity to manage their borders as having improved, while the others do not state an opinion. DE underlines that its support measures were well received in MD. EUBAM hints at a recent Schengen evaluation-based assessment of the border between MD and UA, where a detailed assessment of the quality of border control along this border is provided. The general findings of this assessment indicate that the infrastructure and equipment used by the MD BGS are of medium effectiveness, but are **continuing to improve**. However, some border guard units are still understaffed.

The MD BGS considers its capacity to have been strengthened; this is attributed directly to the abovementioned training activities and in particular those provided outside of the MP by EUBAM and other partners (DE Federal Police, Frontex, the IT Polizia di Stato, the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), the Association of the Border Police from SEE, SEPCA). The MD BGS notes that additional **study visits and cooperation with EU MS services**, as well as internal exchanges between the various local border agents and MD institutions, would help to improve its capacity further. While EUBAM notes that progress has been substantial, the MD BGS will have to strengthen further the consistency of its

¹⁰² 52 cases of illegal migrants and cases of Trafficking in Human Beings were detected along with partners during Joint Border Control Operations in the period of 2008-2011.

¹⁰³ Treaty between Romania and the Republic of Moldova on the regime of the state border, on collaboration and mutual assistance in border-related matters, signed on 8 November 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Integrated Border Management Strategy 2011-2013 approved by Decree No 1212 of 27 December 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Law No 215 of 4 December 2011 on State Border.

¹⁰⁶ Law No 126 of 7 July 2011 on amending and supplementing the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova No 218-XVI of 24 October 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Law No 283 of 28 December 2011 on Border Police.

¹⁰⁸ Project 'Strengthening Capacities and Cooperation in the Identification of Forged and Falsified Travel Documents at the Moldova-Romania Border' funded in the context of the EC Thematic Call on Cooperation on Migration and Asylum and implemented by the ICMPD.

approach to border control and complete its institutional reform by additional amendments to its legal framework. EUBAM wishes to be better informed about activities under the MP so that it can deliver its support more effectively.

II/B/18: Document security

Overview of developments

The number of **falsified MD passports** identified at the MD border has, from a low base, further significantly **declined** from 169 in 2007, to 22 in 2010, and down to 5 in 2011.¹⁰⁹ Assuming that the quality of controls has remained stable or has improved, this points to a strong decline in the use of falsified MD passports. According to those EU MS that have supplied data, the numbers of MD citizens using falsified travel documents¹¹⁰ apprehended by EU MS have likewise declined, from 98 in 2007 to 22 in 2011. In the majority of cases these forged documents were driving licences.

Biometric passports have been issued in MD since 1 February 2008. As from 1 January 2011, in line with the requirements of further visa liberalisation with the EU,¹¹¹ MD started to issue biometric passports exclusively. From 2012 onwards, biometric passports are also issued through MD diplomatic and consular missions abroad. With a view to strengthening document security, the principle of '**one passport-one person**' has been implemented as from 1 January 2011 and data relating to minor children is no longer included in parents' passports. At present, all types of passports (passport of a citizen of the Republic of Moldova, diplomatic passport and service passport), as well as travel documents for stateless persons, are biometric travel documents. The complete phasing out of passports which do not comply with the ICAO is planned for 2020. The MD Ministry of Information Technology and Communications (MITC) is in charge of setting up the procedures for issuing biometric passports. The fee for a biometric passport starts at MDL 700 (about €45)¹¹² and MDL 430 (about €25) for children under 7 years old, compared with MDL 250 (about €16) for a non-biometric passport.

In the framework of the MP, EU MS CZ and DE have helped MD authorities to improve document security. CZ participated as a partner in the ICMPD-run project mentioned below. DE has delivered training sessions on document fraud. The EC has supported the introduction of biometric passports and capacity building in the field of border security through the ICMPD project 'Strengthening Capacities and Cooperation in the Identification of Forged and Falsified Travel Documents at the Moldova-Romania Border', and the supply of equipment through Ericsson AB. These initiatives had a total budget of €3.11 million.

¹⁰⁹ The numbers for the other years were as follows: 69 (2008), 31 (2009).

¹¹⁰ These falsified travel documents could be falsified passports, national identity cards, residence permits or driving licences.

¹¹¹ The Action Plan on Visa Liberalisation with Moldova was endorsed on 16 December 2010 by the European Council. Among other provisions, it aims at consolidating the legal framework for issuing machine-readable biometric passports in full compliance with the highest ICAO standards, taking into account adequate protection of personal data.

¹¹² <http://www.registru.md/pa/#2>

Between 2008 and 2010, the MD authorities prepared the introduction of biometric passports initiating **modifications of the national legislation**.¹¹³ Furthermore, an updated law on personal data protection was adopted in this context.¹¹⁴ Other recent regulatory initiatives that refer to document security are the ‘Law on foreigners’, adopted in 2010,¹¹⁵ and the signing of an ‘Inter-institutional agreement on information exchange’ in 2011, which regulates exchanges of information between different MD national authorities.

Assessment and recommendations

About one third (6) of 15 institutional respondents consider the security of MD travel documents to have been strengthened or highly strengthened (while the others do not offer an assessment). In all, 3 EU MS praise the high standards of document security achieved by MD through the introduction of biometric passports. According to one of the EU MS, security will be further increased with the introduction of new technical features (the cover will include a chip and an antenna). Another MS points to the fact that MD authorities have made steady improvements in terms of document security in the last years with the introduction of specialised paper, ink and printing techniques. One MS also stresses that MD national identity documents and residence permits are almost up the same standard as MD passports. The MD BGS refers to the steadily decreasing numbers of falsified documents identified at the border as a proof of enhanced document security. The ICMPD alludes to the improved quality of training and information exchange among MD authorities as a result of the project under its leadership.

According to one MS, it would be advisable to establish a **regional ‘laboratory’ for falsified documents**, involving MD and UA. Both the MD BGS and the ICMPD are in favour of continuing **information exchange and cooperation** between the MD authorities and experts from EU MS. The ICMPD also suggests creating a consolidated framework for secure identity management by fostering cooperation among destination and origin countries in the areas of document security and the reduction and prevention of irregular migration.

Clearly, very significant progress has been made in terms of strengthening the security of MD travel documents. However, there may be some tension between increasing document security and fostering mobility. Given the low average income in MD,¹¹⁶ it cannot be ruled out that the increased price of a passport acts as an impediment to mobility.

¹¹³ Among other acts, the MD authorities adopted the Law amending Article 2 of Law No 273-XIII of 9 November 1994 regarding the identity documents of the national passport system No 135 of 01.07.2010, ‘Government Decision on the implementation of passports and other travel documents which contain additional biometric data No 125 of 08.02.2008’, and the ‘Government Decision on the approval of the Action Plan for the issuance of biometric passports No 317 of 28.04.2010’.

¹¹⁴ Law on personal data protection No 133 of 08.07.2011.

¹¹⁵ Law on foreigners in the Republic of Moldova No 200 of 16.07.2010.

¹¹⁶ As stated above, according to data from the World Bank, average GDP per capita in MD in 2010 was 1631 US\$ (current US\$)/1231€ (presumed exchange rate 0,7551 \$/€). The price of around €45 for a new biometric passport thus corresponded to roughly 44% of average MD monthly income (€103) in 2010.

II/B/19: Readmission

Overview of developments

Since 2007, the readmission of MD citizens apprehended in EU MS has been regulated by the **EU-MD readmission agreement**.¹¹⁷ Since then, protocols to the agreement have been concluded between MD and the following EU MS: AT, DE, LV, MT, BG, DK, SK, HU, RO, LT, EE and CZ.¹¹⁸ There has been a steadily increasing number of readmission requests under the agreement and the respective protocols: from 33 in 2008, to 114 in 2009, 221 in 2010 and 242 in 2011. The number of MD citizens readmitted has also risen: from 23 in 2008, to 88 in 2009, 110 in 2010 and 126 in 2011. Overall, the ratio between requests and readmission under the EU readmission agreement 2008-2011 was 57%. No requests for readmission of third-country nationals have been reported. In 2010, for the first time, 54 foreign citizens present in MD were readmitted to their countries of origin on the basis of the bilateral agreements MD had concluded with non-EU countries. This number rose to 70 in 2010.

Under the MP, MD has received bilateral assistance from HU in implementing the EU-MD readmission agreement in the form of training sessions. HU, PL, CZ and DE either took part in or co-sponsored the initiatives implemented by the IOM and the ICMPD. The IOM has implemented two EC-financed projects 'Technical cooperation and capacity building for the Governments of Ukraine and Moldova for the implementation of readmission Agreements with the European Union (GUMIRA)' and 'Support for the implementation of the readmission agreement: Facilitation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration (SIREADA)'. Under the GUMIRA project, a report on readmission and a series of recommendations were produced (including a recommendation to set up a system of assisted voluntary return). The SIREADA project followed up this specific recommendation and provides a legislative review in this domain. The projects are funded by the EC, DE, IT and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The ICMPD is currently implementing the EC-funded project 'Supporting the implementation of the EC visa facilitation and readmission agreements in Moldova and Georgia (ReVis)', in which a range of additional training and policy needs have so far been identified. The implementing partners of the ICMPD project are CH, BG, DK, FI, HU and LT.

The combined approximate budget of the MD component for readmission-related activities is €1.6 million.

In addition to the agreements and protocols mentioned at the beginning, the EU-MD readmission regime is further supported by **bilateral and unilateral acts**. Since 2011, the PL and MD border guard services collaborate on the basis of a dedicated agreement.¹¹⁹ The procedures for the return, expulsion and readmission of foreigners from MD have recently

¹¹⁷ Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Moldova on the readmission of persons residing without authorisation of 10 October 2007.

¹¹⁸ Negotiations are ongoing for a protocol to the agreement between MD and PL. MD has also concluded readmission agreements with RS and CH.

¹¹⁹ Agreement between the Border Guard Department of the Republic of Moldova and Polish Border Guard Chief on Cooperation in the Field of Combating Organised Crime and Other Forms of Crime of 20 September 2011.

been updated through the adoption in 2010 of the 'Law on Foreigners'¹²⁰ and a decision in 2011 by the MD government.¹²¹

Assessment and recommendations

A clear majority of 10 out of 14 institutional respondents 'agrees' or 'strongly agrees' that the **EU-MD readmission regime has been strengthened** since 2008, and 9 out of 14 agree that the MP has had an important influence in this respect. Nevertheless, about a third (5 out of 14) states that adjustments to the MP could further strengthen the readmission regime. Several EU MS (including FR, PL, RO, DE and CZ) express their satisfaction with the readmission regime and the collaboration with the MD authorities under that regime. The MD MoI points to the fact that readmissions have increased five-fold, which proves the success of the implementation of the EU-MD readmission agreement.

With a view to the future implementation of the EU-MD readmission regime, the MD Ministry of Interior and the MD Border Guards Service both see a need for agreements with the EU MS authorities in charge of readmission procedures. Such agreements should cover **information exchange and institutional cooperation**. This assessment is shared by the IOM.

Already in the context of the GUMIRA project, the IOM had recommended: improving **interdepartmental cooperation in MD and cooperation with EU agencies**; granting MD authorities access to EU databases; concluding further protocols with EU MS and readmission agreements with third countries; and further investing in building the capacity of MD authorities.

II/B/20: Irregular migration to, from, and through MD to EU MS

Overview of developments

The number of MD citizens reported as staying irregularly in EU MS varies depending on the source of information, making it difficult to determine their exact number.¹²² Here, the number of individuals identified as staying illegally on a territory is used as a proxy. Hence, it is not clear how this number relates to the total number of irregular immigrants; almost certainly, this ratio also varies from one host country to another.

¹²⁰ Law No 200 of 16 July 2010 on Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova.

¹²¹ Governmental decision No 492 of 7 July 2011 'On Approval of Instructions on the return, expulsion and readmission of foreigners from the Republic of Moldova'.

¹²² These very rough and somewhat dated estimates are provided by the CLANDESTINO database (<http://irregular-migration.net>). According to the database, which provides data for 2007, in that year, among EU MS and MP partner countries, only IT and CZ hosted significant numbers of MD irregular migrants (more than 2% of the total number of irregular migrants present in the respective country). For CZ, the figure of 4000 irregular MD migrants is quoted. However, this number could constitute anything between 1.7% and 10% of the total number of irregular migrants, since their number remains unclear (estimates range from 40000 to 240000 irregular migrants present in CZ in that year). For IT, it is estimated that in 2007 around 5% of irregular migrants were MD citizens. Depending on the estimate, this might correspond to between 17450 and 32550 individuals.

Among the respondents, CZ, FR, PL, RO, SK, BG and HU supplied data on the number of **MD citizens identified as staying irregularly** on their territory, which show a significant decline, from 2689 in 2007 to 1642 in 2011 i.e. 39%.¹²³

The number of **irregular migrants identified on MD territory** varied, although it followed a somewhat downward trend. According to the MD Ministry of Interior, in 2007 it was 2961, in 2008 it was 3245, in 2009 it was 1961, in 2010 it was 2298 and in 2011 it was 1700. In any year since 2007, RU citizens were the largest group of irregular immigrants (between 30 and 38%), followed by UA citizens (between 21 and 27% of all irregular migrants), and TR citizens (between 5 and 10%).

The current economic crisis affecting Europe since 2008 has also influenced the migration and mobility trends and the numbers presented above have to be also interpreted in its context.

MD concluded **several agreements with EU MS with a view to working together to counter trans-border crime and illegal migration**; one was concluded in 2007 with SK on cooperation on the fight against crime, and another with RO in 2010 on asylum and migration.

Activities in the legislative sphere in this area were marked by the adoption of the IBM strategy, the law on foreigners and the national strategy on migration and asylum.¹²⁴

Many of the initiatives under the MP aim, at least partly, to reduce and prevent irregular migration, and most clearly those in the field of readmission, border security, document security or information of migrants.¹²⁵ Thus, only a few additional initiatives have been reported by partner institutions in this area. Nevertheless, in 2010-2011, training courses focused on curbing irregular migration (financed via TAIEX) were provided by SK; PL has provided funding for a project on 'Strengthening reception and detention capacities of MD migration services', and RO has deployed officers to the 'Pilot Project Coordination Points 2011' coordinated by Frontex with the support of the EUBAM. In 2009, the MD Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the HU Ministry of Justice, conducted a seminar on 'EU legislation on migration, the staying regime of foreigners, fighting illegal migration and detention procedures in temporary shelters'.

Assessment and recommendations

In their assessment, 6 out of 14 institutional respondents notice a **reduction in irregular migration to, from and through Moldova to the EU** (one disagrees, the others do not provide an assessment), while 4 of them consider that the MP has a significant influence in this regard. RO notes that MD citizens remain the most important group of those against whom return decisions are issued, and among those who participate in Assisted Voluntary Return programmes.¹²⁶

¹²³ In 2008, this number stood at 2403, in 2009 at 1845 and in 2010 at 1664.

¹²⁴ The details regarding these legislative acts are referred to in the corresponding sections of this report.

¹²⁵ An example is the project 'Building Training and Analytical Capacities on Migration in Moldova and Georgia (GOVAC)', financed by the EC and implemented by the ICMPD, mentioned in this respect by one MS as contributing to the fight against illegal migration.

¹²⁶ In 2011, RO approved 1365 requests from MD citizens for short-stay visas for visiting purposes; MD citizens also represented the largest group of temporary legal residents in Romania (15251 persons).

In terms of the future prevention and reduction of irregular migration to, from and through Moldova to the EU, the MD Ministry of Interior and the MD Border Guards Service reiterate their suggestion of **enhancing cooperation with corresponding EU MS authorities** through the conclusion of cooperation agreements.

II/B/21: Combating and preventing trafficking in human beings

Overview of developments

While trafficking in human beings¹²⁷ (also: human trafficking/trafficking) still persists as a significant and very serious phenomenon in MD, the available figures indicate that the country is managing increasingly well to prevent human trafficking and to assist victims. Policies and initiatives in the field of human trafficking are coordinated by the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons. By Order No 124/15 of 22 June 2007 of the Attorney General, the Coordinating Council was created. It was established to coordinate the activities of law enforcement and other competent bodies in combating trafficking in human beings.

Assistance to victims of trafficking, as well as potential victims, is delivered through the National Referral System¹²⁸ (NRS), which brings together multi-disciplinary teams from governmental and non-governmental entities, involving social workers, police officers, doctors, teachers and representatives of local employment agencies, who deliver and coordinate assistance. The NRS has been pilot-tested since 2006 and has recently been rolled out to cover the whole country. According to the MD Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF), in 2007 MD authorities registered 273 victims of trafficking. In 2008, this number decreased to 158 but rose again to 181 in 2010.¹²⁹ At the same time, the number of victims and potential victims identified and assisted through the NRS increased significantly: in 2007, 34 victims and 52 potential victims were assisted. In 2011, 109 victims and 651 potential victims received assistance.¹³⁰ According to figures from the CCTP and the IOM (which has been heavily involved in shaping MD's response to human trafficking), the number of trafficking cases has more than halved. The IOM mentions the number of trafficking cases where criminal proceedings have been initiated, which have been sent to the prosecutor and which have been sent to trial. For the period 2007-2011,

¹²⁷Defined in the 'Law of the Republic of Moldova on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings', Article 2(1) as 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation'.

¹²⁸ Decision of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova No 257-XVI on the Approval of the Strategy of the National Referral System for the Protection and Assistance of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings and of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy on the National Referral System for the Protection and Assistance of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings for the period 2009-2011.

¹²⁹The CCTP reports 181 victims of human trafficking for 2010.

¹³⁰ The figures for the other years were as follows: in 2008, 84 victims and 203 potential victims received assistance; in 2009, 131 victims and 308 potential victims received assistance; and in 2010, 132 victims and 328 potential victims received assistance.

the respective numbers were 288/-/177 in 2007, 246/186/108 in 2008, 206/178/113 in 2009, 161/121/55 in 2010 and 134/93/59 in 2011.¹³¹

No initiatives in the field of **combating and preventing trafficking in human beings** were reported by EU MS to have been carried out under the MP. However, the CCTP and the MD Border Guards Service refer to joint seminars held with the SK and DE authorities, The IOM provided close support for the establishment and operation of the NRS under the EC-financed projects 'Supporting the implementation of the migration and development component of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership' (since 2011), and 'Addressing the Negative Effects of Migration on Minors and Families Left Behind', supported by the IT Ministry of Labour (also since 2011). The social protection component of these projects has a combined budget of about €1.5 million. Outside the framework of the MP, the NRS has been supported already for several years by CH.¹³² Longstanding support for anti-trafficking initiatives has also been forthcoming from the OSCE Mission to MD, the CIS Anti-Trafficking Programme (CAT) and the Programme Against Human Trafficking in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, funded by the DK Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICMPD has been supporting the Government of Moldova in its anti-trafficking response since 2006. MD participated in two projects: the Programme to Support the Development of Transnational Referral Mechanisms for Trafficked Persons in South-East Europe (TRM-SEE),¹³³ funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented in the period 2006-2009; and Enhancing Transnational Cooperation on Trafficking Cases in South-Eastern Europe (TRM-II), funded by USAID and implemented in 2010-2012.

The **regulatory basis for combating and preventing trafficking** is formed by: the MD criminal code, adopted in 2002; the 2005 law on combating trafficking,¹³⁴ the Palermo Protocols, ratified in 2005;¹³⁵ and the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings, which entered into force in MD in 2008. A number of government decisions further define the regulatory framework, among others the decision on the establishment of a

¹³¹ The CCTP provides somewhat different numbers, although they show a similar trend. In 2007, 251 offences in the field of human trafficking were registered, in 2008 - 215, in 2009 - 185, in 2010 - 140, and in 2011 - 111. It is not clear why the numbers differ.

¹³² The CH Development Cooperation with the project 'Strengthening the National Referral System in Moldova', which was implemented by the IOM between 11/2008 and 06/2012. The project had a budget of CHF 493 292 (about € 410 000).

¹³³ As project partners the TRM-SEE involved MARRI, ACTA, the UNICEF Regional Office CEE-CIS, and the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior. The project was implemented in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo* (*this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence), Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia.

¹³⁴ Law on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings (No 241-XVI) of 20.10.2005.

¹³⁵ 'Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, 15 November 2000, Palermo', ratified by MD through Law No 17-XV of 17 February 2005 and the 'Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, air and sea, 15 November 2000, Palermo' ratified by Law No 16-XV of 17.02.2005.

National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings,¹³⁶ and on the repatriation of victims of trafficking.¹³⁷ Since 2008, the MD government has regularly adopted action plans in the field.¹³⁸ Since 2004, BG and MD have had an agreement on cooperation in the field of anti-trafficking.¹³⁹

Assessment and recommendations

Only one EU MS provides an assessment as to whether trafficking in human beings within, from, and through MD has been efficiently addressed, ‘strongly disagreeing’ that progress has been made. Two other institutional respondents provide a positive assessment, while others abstain from answering. The MD CCTP considers that the strategies devised by MD authorities are working well, pointing to the relative decline in the number of victims of trafficking and cases of trafficking prosecuted. It also notes that in a 2010 scientific report¹⁴⁰ the US State Department rated MD among the top countries in terms of progress made in the field of addressing trafficking and seventh worldwide in terms of prosecution, protection and prevention of human trafficking. The IOM draws attention to the rising numbers of potential victims of trafficking assisted and sees this assistance as instrumental in the declining number of reported cases of trafficking. According to the IOM, projects within the MP have contributed to positive developments in the field, while efforts by other entities have also been significant.

With a view to the future, two MS want to launch an initiative to do more to address trafficking in human beings within, from, and through MD. The IOM stresses that the focus should be on prevention, as exemplified by the efforts made under the MP to identify and assist vulnerable children. The NRS has proven a successful model and should be further supported. The ICMPD suggests continuing the negotiations for future cooperation with the Moldovan authorities on the issue of labour exploitation.

With regard to new initiatives being planned by some partners, it should be stressed that the **system** already in place is **very elaborate**, and duplication of efforts should be avoided.

¹³⁶Government Decision on approval of nominal composition and amendment to the composition of the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Regulation of the National Committee and National Plan for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2008-2009 (No 472, no. 795).

¹³⁷ Government Decision on Approval of Regulation on Procedure for Repatriation of Child and Adult Victims of Human Trafficking, Migrant Smuggling, and Unaccompanied Children No 948.

¹³⁸‘Government Decision on the approval of the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), Regulations of the National Committee and the National Plan to prevent and combat THB for 2008-2009 (No 472, No 795)’ and ‘Government Decision No 1170 approving the Additional National Plan for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings for 2010-2011.’

¹³⁹Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on cooperation in combating organised crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, terrorism as well as other kinds of serious crime of 24 May 2004.

¹⁴⁰ See: ‘3P Anti-trafficking Policy Index 2010 Ranking’ in Cho, Dreher, and Neumayer 2011 ‘Several Developed Countries Fail to Protect Human Trafficking Victims — Release of the 2010 Anti-trafficking Policy Index’, Universitatea din Goettingen.

III: General conclusions and recommendations

There has been significant dynamism in EU-Moldova relations, acquiring substance in all segments of cooperation, but especially in the field of Justice and Home Affairs. The Mobility Partnership (MP) has been an important part of this cooperation.

The evaluation shows that, overall, the EU-MD MP has been a clear success. The partners' priorities have largely been matched, and there can be no doubt that cooperation and collaboration in the fields of migration and mobility have been strengthened since the initiation of the MP in 2008. Forums for exchange and the joint elaboration of policies have been created and strengthened. In many cases, new ties have been built between the MD authorities and their EU counterparts. This intense cooperation has created an atmosphere where innovative policy initiatives are now being put in practice in sensitive fields such as labour migration, addressing the negative impacts of migration and irregular migration. Respondents have hailed the flexibility of the MP instrument as one of its major strengths, allowing partners' priorities to be addressed in a targeted way.

Moreover, **clear progress has been made** in some of the specific policy areas addressed by the MP. It is generally agreed that since 2008 readmission and return have been facilitated, border security strengthened, the MD asylum system improved, document security boosted and the administration of the MD labour market improved. Efforts have been made to promote short-term mobility by making it easier to issue short-stay visas, including issuing to MD citizens multiple-entry visas by the EU MS. However, there is scope for enhancing mobility even further, including the mobility of specific groups such as students and academics.

It is also clear that the capacity of the MD authorities to formulate and implement policies has been strengthened, although the sustainability of this progress has been called into question by various stakeholders because turnover of MD officials remains high and MD's own financial resources are extremely limited.

Then there are areas in which **efforts have been substantial, but improvements have still to materialise.** There are very few initiatives to foster circular labour migration between MD and the EU and they are limited to small- scale, bilateral pilot schemes. Moreover, there is considerable scope for building up MD authorities' capacities to manage this kind of migration. Several agreements have been concluded on the transfer of social security benefits, but the amounts transferred under these agreements are still marginal for the moment. Strengthening the implementation of existing agreements and concluding such agreements with more partners would help to achieve the MP's objectives. There are comprehensive initiatives to tackle the situation of family members left behind by migrants, but the figures show that the problem has not yet been solved. A complex framework for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning is being developed, but it remains to be seen whether it will actually prevent 'brain waste' with regard to the reintegration and economic empowerment of returning migrants. The problem of 'brain waste' abroad, i.e. the under-utilisation of skills acquired in MD when working abroad, has so far received little or no attention).

A number of policy areas have been addressed only marginally under the MP. In some of those areas, such as in the field of combating trafficking in human beings, improvement has been substantial, although this is to be attributed more to initiatives and developments outside the MP. In other, less addressed, fields, such as fostering the development impact of remittances, or improving awareness-raising (in particular how to obtain a visa and pre-departure services offered in MD) or directly targeting migrants/potential migrants, a few small-scale initiatives have been carried out and moderate progress has been made. It is evident that in these areas, more determined action could have produced better results. From the MD perspective, crucial objectives such as facilitating return migration and preventing 'brain drain' have eschewed political action under the MP. Out-migration from MD continues, and only a few migrants, especially the well qualified ones, have returned, despite the efforts that have been made to initiate such a process. It has been stressed on numerous occasions that migrants will not return unless economic and social conditions in the country of origin improve. It has also been pointed out that to achieve this, political and economic measures are required that reach far beyond the realm of migration policies.

A balanced approach addressing the three pillars of the Global Approach to Migration has increasingly been achieved. While there is still a predominance of security-centred policies aimed at fighting irregular migration, there has been progress in giving more weight to migration and development, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in facilitating legal migration. What is more, in the case of MD, the MP has gone beyond the GAM, strengthening cooperation in a wide range of areas of justice and home affairs, and is already addressing questions of international protection and short-term mobility, which are prominent features of the renewed GAMM. Efforts should also be made to balance out the pillars of the GAMM and make current and future MPs more migrant-focused as demanded by the renewed GAMM. However, initiatives are leaning towards those which benefit institutional actors. There have been fewer initiatives that are of direct benefit to individual migrants.

One major shortcoming of the MP is the lack of integrated monitoring or evaluation mechanisms, especially those based on quantitative indicators. At various points in the evaluation, partners express their uncertainty about developments in specific areas of intervention, or provide a qualitative assessment of a situation which does not match the trends revealed through the quantitative indicators generated for that evaluation. In theory, the MP evaluation process could use other monitoring tools in the field of migration and mobility, such as the extended migration profile of the Republic of Moldova, although it would need to be adapted for this purpose.

Throughout the report there are detailed suggestions as to how to continue in future collaboration in the different policy areas covered by the MP. However, there are several recommendations which concern the ground rules and the design of the MP. These are set out or reiterated below, with specific reference to the implementation of the EU-MD MP, but also with the purpose of addressing the issues which are relevant to other current and future MPs.

Cooperation

1. EU MS continue to launch bilateral cooperation in the field of migration and mobility, outside the MP umbrella, and the EU finances projects which are also not always covered by the MP. This may reduce the effectiveness of initiatives under the MP and at any rate it is a lost opportunity in terms of visibility and potential synergy effects. It is therefore suggested **that cooperation with the partner country should take advantage more consistently of the MP umbrella**. When addressing issues of migration and mobility between MD and EU, it would be advisable for all partners involved to cooperate strictly with the partner country within the framework of the MP.
2. The success of the MP has been possible only because of the **exceptional willingness for cooperation** of partners on the EU and the MD sides, indicating that future MPs should only be concluded with those who are prepared to collaborate effectively.
3. In order to increase the synergies between different initiatives, the design and results of those considered as **'best practice' should be widely shared** among all the stakeholders.

Coordination

4. Coordination among partners (including local authorities) must take place before projects are initiated, or **at an early stage**, with a view to the wider involvement of more players (including more than one EU MS). Indeed, multilateral initiatives provide important added value to MPs. The MD authorities should take a more **proactive role** in the design of the initiatives, to ensure that they reflect their priorities, in particular when the projects are implemented by international players. This could be achieved through systematic consultations for each initiative from the design stage to the evaluation. Obligations and responsibilities should be clearly defined from the start.
5. There are already a very large number of initiatives within the EU-MD MP. However, further initiatives in areas related to, but not covered by the MP, are being implemented (e.g. border management, asylum, THB). It should be clear whether and how the MP should encompass/relate to these initiatives, so as to avoid confusion about what is in fact covered by the MP and create synergies between all these activities. In line with the renewed GAMM, **the framework encompassing all the initiatives in all four areas of GAMM should take the form of MPs**. Ensuring such clarity from the start is also an important lesson learnt for future MPs.
6. At the same time, partners should consider in what form they wish to include in MPs **complex objectives** (such as the prevention of 'brain drain'), which cannot be achieved solely by the means that partners are willing or able to provide.
7. The role of the (EC-funded) **Migration Technical Facility (MTF)** is crucial for the EU-MD MP and makes a significant contribution to day-to-day coordination tasks. The creation of this post (or something similar) should be considered for other MPs as well. However, the sustainability of this position should be improved. One of the options would be for it to be covered financially by the MP partner countries' own funds.
8. Existing coordination mechanisms, both within and between partners' institutions, have worked well, although further improvements in that regard could still be made. In particular, coordination meetings (local cooperation platform and high-level MP meetings) should be organised in a way that allows for **more targeted discussions on operational and political aspects**.

9. More **experts from capitals** should participate in local cooperation platform meetings, as participating embassy staff often lack the specialised knowledge to engage in discussions, a shortcoming already discussed in SEC(2009) 1240. Efficient coordination between the respective capitals of the EU MS and their representations in Brussels and Chisinau is crucial.
10. Some thought should be given to restructuring the **scoreboard** in order to simplify it and at the same time make it more consistent. The tool could be web-based to allow for easier updating and access. If a section were introduced on future cooperation needs regarding the scoreboard, it would be easier to identify projects and potential partners. All partners should regularly provide a summary of the achievements of completed projects. This summary should be entered in the scoreboard in line with the section on future cooperation needs. It should be clear from the scoreboard whether these needs have been met and when.
11. It might be worth considering the obligation for all partners to **report activities in the field of migration and mobility** implemented in the framework of the Mobility Partnership and ideally also those implemented beyond the framework, so that they can be added to a revised scoreboard.

Sustainability of initiatives and human resource requirements

12. There should be greater focus on the **sustainability of initiatives**. In this context, human resources should be made available within the structures that are expected to take on a stronger coordinating role (EC, EU Delegation in MD, MD authorities, etc.). Moreover, the turnover of personnel within local authorities in MD and the related **loss of human capital** must be addressed effectively.

Integration of monitoring and evaluation in the design and implementation of the MP

13. The MP and associated initiatives should rely more on evidence and should **be monitored regularly** — on the basis of qualitative and, crucially, quantitative data (the value of combining the two should now be clear from this report). At the same time, the MP evaluation process can make use of other monitoring tools in the field of migration and mobility, such as the extended migration profile (EMP) of the Republic of Moldova. However, if one of the purposes of the EMP is the evaluation of the MP, this should be clearly reflected in its structure, and it should contain a dedicated MP-evaluation section. As experience with the EMP exercise and this evaluation shows, this is not an easy process, but demands determination and the allocation of human resources from partner institutions. In the case of MD, for instance, the MTF was closely involved in the evaluation process,
14. For future MPs, the **evaluation exercise** should be worked out from the start. In fact, it could be built into the MP Declaration more prominently from the very beginning. The initial analysis of the situation and needs in the partner country, the fixing of benchmarks, as well as later evaluations of the framework should take place in closer consultations with the target group concerned (i.e. migrant representatives and other beneficiaries). As far as possible, benchmarks should also be quantitative to allow for an objective evaluation.

15. As far as possible, also in the case of single initiatives, stakeholders should be consulted ex-ante and benchmarks, including quantitative ones, should be fixed in such a way that **evidence-based evaluation** can be carried out later on.

Balance of initiatives within the MP and focus on individual beneficiaries

16. One central question which is raised in various parts of the report is how to balance out the pillars of the GAMM. Another question is how to make MPs more migrant-focused. In order to balance out the different pillars of GAMM and create synergies between the implemented activities, **more targeted initiatives for cooperation** should be introduced, reflecting the respective pillars, and allowing for more specific discussions and planning of future projects.
17. Efforts should also be made to make present and future MPs more **migrant-centred**, as required by the renewed GAMM. In particular, ways should be found to consult migrants, and, where appropriate, civil society organisations, on the priorities to which the MP should respond and the initiatives that should be implemented.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AM	Armenia
AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
BGS	Border Guard Service
BIR	Bureau for Interethnic Relations
BMA	Bureau for Migration and Asylum
CARIM	Consortium for Applied Researches on International Migration
CAT	Citizens Against Trafficking
CBSAR	Common Border Security Assessment Report
CBS-AXA	Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing 'CBS-AXA'
CCTP	Centre for Combating Trafficking in Persons
CEEPUS	Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies
CH	Switzerland
CIM	Centre for International Migration and Development
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CTDs	Convention Travel Documents
CVAC	Common Visa Application Centre
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
CzDA	Czech Development Agency
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EC	European Commission
EE	Estonia
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMP	Extended Migration Profile
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUBAM	EU Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine
EUI	European University Institute
FI	Finland
FR	France
Frontex	The European Agency for the Management of Operation Cooperation at the External Borders of the Members States of the European Union
GAMM	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility
GD	Government Decision
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Georgia
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GR	Greece
HU	Hungary
IBM	Integrated Border Management

ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MARRI	Migration Asylum refugees regional Initiative
MD	Republic of Moldova
MDL	Moldovan Leu
ME	Ministry of Economy
MFAEI	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MITC	Ministry of Information Technology and Communication
MLSPF	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
MoE	Ministry of Education
MP	Mobility Partnership
MS	Member States
MT	Malta
MTF	Migration Technical Facility
NBM	National Bank of Moldova
NBS	National Bureau for Statistics
NEA	National Employment Agency
NRS	National Referral System
OIE	Operational Information Exchange
OSCE	Organisation for security and Cooperation in Europe
OSMED	Organisation for Small and Medium Enterprises Development
PAIES	Pre-arrival information exchange system
PARE 1+1	Pilot Program on Attracting Remittances into the Economy
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
RS	Serbia
SC	State Chancellery
SE	Sweden
SEE	South-East Europe
SEPCA	Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association
SI	Slovenia
SIIAGS	Integrated Automatic Information System on Border Management
SIIAMA	Integrated Automatic Information System on Migration and Asylum
SK	Slovakia
SPES	Swedish Public Employment Service
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument
TR	Turkish
UA	Ukraine
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNFPA
UNHCR
VET
WHO

United Nations Population Fund
United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
Vocational Education and Training
World Health Organization