

SUBMISSION PREPARED BY THE PLATFORM FOR GENDER EQUALITY, MOLDOVAN NGOS AND INDIVIDUALS UNITED TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN MOLDOVA

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GENDER EQUALITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN

1. This report has been produced by the Platform for Gender Equality (PEG). The document was prepared for submission to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in preparation for the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Moldova's implementation of international obligations before the UN Human Rights Council.
2. The PEG is an informal network in the Republic of Moldova, comprising 62 civil society organizations and activists who promote women's rights and gender equality in all areas of public and private life. Established in 2015, PEG functions as a space for coordination, feminist solidarity, and collective action and is one of the most active and visible advocacy initiatives focused on gender in the country.
3. PEG is a recognized and effective civil society actor in advancing gender equality in national legislation, promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, and combating violence against women, including in the political sphere. The platform's members bring practical and diverse expertise in key areas such as providing specialized services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV); working with women with disabilities and supporting their inclusion; women's economic empowerment and equal access to resources; and advancing the rights of Roma women and combating multiple forms of discrimination.

I. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR GENDER EQUALITY

(3rd cycle recommendations: 127.157; broad: 127. 166; 127.169)

The Republic of Moldova has established a comprehensive legal framework for the institutional mechanism on gender equality under Law No. 5/2006 on Ensuring Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. The mechanism includes the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP), the Governmental Commission on Equality between Women and Men, gender coordination groups, gender units within public authorities, and gender focal points at central and local levels. However, despite this institutional architecture, the mechanism remains weak in practice. The MLSP has formal responsibility for coordinating gender equality policies across government structures but lacks sufficient authority and enforcement powers to ensure effective implementation by other ministries and public institutions. Moreover, the Governmental Commission on Equality between Women and Men - the central political coordination body established by law - has effectively ceased to function, significantly weakening high-level coordination and accountability.

During its third Universal Periodic Review in 2022, the Republic of Moldova accepted numerous recommendations concerning gender equality, including strengthening institutional mechanisms and gender mainstreaming across public policies (A/HRC/50/13¹).

Government Decision No. 203/2023 approving the Program for the Promotion and Ensuring of Equality between Women and Men 2023-2027² reaffirmed the MLSP's mandate to coordinate gender equality policies, provide methodological guidance to gender units, and monitor implementation across public institutions. The Program also foresees measures to strengthen institutional capacities for gender mainstreaming.

¹ Human Rights Council. *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Republic of Moldova*. A/HRC/50/13. (2022). Available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/50/13>.

² FAO/FOALEX. *Government Resolution No. HG203/2023 validating the Program for the promotion and ensuring equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova for 2023–2027* (2023). Available at: <https://leap.unep.org/en/countries/md/national-legislation/government-resolution-no-hg2032023-validating-program-promotion>.

In parallel, the Government initiated a broader reform of the national human rights institutional framework. Government Decision No. 1 of 25 August 2022 established specialized commissions under the National Human Rights Council³ to coordinate the implementation of international human rights treaties. Within this structure, gender equality has been incorporated into a Subcommittee on Non-discrimination and Gender Equality.

These developments are commendable, yet the institutional mechanism for gender equality remains fragmented and ineffective.

Firstly, the Governmental Commission on Equality between Women and Men has not been reactivated, despite its statutory role under Law No. 5/2006 and the recommendation of the CEDAW Committee to restore a high-level governmental coordination body dedicated to gender equality.

Moreover, the MLSP continues to carry a dual mandate as both a sectoral ministry and the national coordinator for gender equality, but without adequate legal authority or institutional leverage to ensure compliance by ministries outside its administrative hierarchy.

Furthermore, the ongoing institutional reform also raises concerns regarding compliance with the national legal framework. The integration of gender equality into a broader human rights subcommittee risks weakening the autonomy, visibility, and policy influence of the dedicated gender equality mechanism established under Law No. 5/2006⁴. Any reform that effectively replaces the Governmental Commission without legislative amendments may create inconsistencies with domestic legislation governing the institutional framework for gender equality.

Finally, in practice, gender units and gender focal points continue to perform gender equality functions as additional responsibilities rather than dedicated positions, limiting institutional capacity, continuity, and accountability. Coordination between central authorities, local public administrations, and other relevant institutions also remains inconsistent and largely dependent on individual initiatives rather than institutionalized cooperation mechanisms.

Recommendations:

- Reactivate the Governmental Commission on Equality between Women and Men, or establish an equivalent high-level coordination body with a clear legal mandate, in accordance with Law No. 5/2006 and the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee.
- Ensure that institutional reforms preserve the distinct legal status and mandate of the national gender equality mechanism, avoiding its absorption into broader human rights structures without corresponding legislative amendments.
- Strengthen the authority and coordination mandate of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection by providing adequate legal and institutional mechanisms to oversee gender mainstreaming across all public authorities.
- Institutionalize regular coordination and reporting mechanisms among the MLSP, line ministries, local public authorities, independent institutions, and civil society to ensure coherent implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies

³ Government of the Republic of Moldova, National Council for Human Rights. *Decision No. 1 of 25 August 2022*. (2022, August 25). Available at: https://gov.md/sites/default/files/users-media/media-16/media17/transparenta%20decizionala/consiliul%20pentru%20coordonarea%20dezv%20durabile/decizia_nr.1_din_25_august_2022_al_cndo.pdf.

⁴ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. (2006, February 9). *Law No. 5 on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men* (Law No. 5/2006). Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova, No. 47–50, Art. 200. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=97458&lang=ro.

II: GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) means allocating and spending public funds in ways that respond to the different needs of women and men and reduce inequalities. In Moldova, GRB is recent and limited in scope: the first budget cycle with mandatory GRB provisions dates from 2024, and the practice applies so far to a few pilot ministries. Most public spending however is still planned without gender objectives, and budget execution reports do not show how funds affect women and men. As a result, neither Parliament nor the public can verify whether the state budget reduces gender inequalities.

In its third review (January 2022), Moldova accepted recommendations on gender equality relevant to public finance and women's economic empowerment (A/HRC/50/13⁵, recommendations 127.157, 127.158, 127.160, 127.161, 127.162, 127.163, 127.165, 127.166, and 127.169). Since then, two documents have set the legal basis for GRB: the Public Finance Management Development Strategy 2023-2030⁶ and the National Program on Ensuring Equality between Women and Men 2023-2027⁷. In 2024, the Ministry of Finance issued, for the first time, an annual budget cycle with mandatory GRB provisions, requiring selected authorities to include gender objectives in the 2025 budget cycle. For 2025, the state budget law applied GRB in two pilot ministries: the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP).⁸ The Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) circular for 2025–2027 then expanded the pilot to more ministries, including the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development.⁹

Gender-sensitive indicators in the MAFI rose from 8 in 2025 to 19 in 2026. MLSP's active labor-market subprogram (9008) added parity targets for vocational training, while its allocation grew from 34.1 to 196.13 million lei. The infrastructure subprogram on water and sanitation (7503) introduced gender-disaggregated targets (200,000 people to gain access, of whom 100,000 are women). The 2026 state budget also finances the newly created National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, operational since 2026, and the VioData case-registry system.¹⁰

GRB is not yet institutionalized across the government. Only about 3.5% of the total 2026 state budget expenditure is linked to explicit gender indicators and a further 7.9% to disability-sensitive indicators, while roughly 88.6% remains untagged for. There are no intersectional indicators for women with disabilities, even where data show women are overrepresented among service beneficiaries. Most indicators measure access to services (outputs) rather than changes in people's lives (outcomes), and there is still no systematic gender budget statement or ex-post gender impact evaluation. Most of the reform is still funded by donors rather than from the state budget.

⁵ Human Rights Council. *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Republic of Moldova*, A/HRC/50/13. (29 March 2022). Available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/50/13>.

⁶ Government of the Republic of Moldova. (2023, February 22). *Government Decision No. 71 on the approval of the Public Finance Management Development Strategy 2023-2030*. Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova. No. 75-78, Item 148. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135819&lang=ro.

⁷ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Republic of Moldova. (2026). *Gender Equality Acceleration Programme 2023-2027*. Available at: <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Program-accelerare-egalitate-de-gen.pdf>.

⁸ Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Moldova. (2026). *State Budget 2026*. Available at: <https://mf.gov.md/ro/content/bugetul-de-stat-2026>.

⁹ Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Moldova. (2025). "MTBF 2025–2027." Available at: [https://www.legis.md/UserFiles/Image/RO/2024/mo370-372md/CBTM%C2%AD_561\(1\).docx](https://www.legis.md/UserFiles/Image/RO/2024/mo370-372md/CBTM%C2%AD_561(1).docx)

¹⁰ Alexandru Gribincea. (2026). *Analysis of the 2026 State Budget from the Perspective of Gender Equality and the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities*. Keystone Moldova. Available at: https://gbwn.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Moldova-budget-commentaries-2026-1_compressed.pdf.

Recommendations:

- The Government should extend GRB to all line ministries, starting with the 2027–2029 budget cycle. In each upcoming budget cycle, the share of expenditure covered by explicit gender indicators should be increased.
- The Ministry of Finance should require ex-post gender impact evaluations for all subprograms above 100 million lei and publish them on its budget portal.
- Line ministries in the GRB pilot should add intersectional indicators for women with disabilities.
- Budget indicators should measure outcomes: real change in women’s situation, not only access to services.
- The Government should fund GRB from the state budget rather than donors and require gender-disaggregated data in budget execution reports.

III. ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR) IN MOLDOVA

(3rd cycle recommendations: 127.147; 127.148; broad 127.157)

While the Republic of Moldova has established a legal SRHR framework, universal access is still an issue.¹¹ For instance, adolescent pregnancy rates in the Republic of Moldova remain three times higher than the European average, with 26.2 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 compared to just 9 in the European Union.¹² Moreover, approximately 6 out of every 100 babies in Moldova are born to adolescent mothers.¹³ This disparity, coupled with rising HIV incidence among youth, which increased from 14.9 to 19 cases per 100,000 between 2015 and 2020,¹⁴ underscores the urgent need for a transition from donor-led initiatives to a state-owned, citizen-centered health system.

The persistence of this issue is tied to the fact that modern contraception remains severely underutilized, as only 39% of women of reproductive age use modern contraceptive methods, directly contributing to unplanned pregnancies.¹⁵ Although family planning services are de jure covered by the National Health Insurance Company (CNAM), free contraceptive commodities are currently distributed only to 12 categories of “vulnerable groups”, creating a tiered health system where access depends on vulnerability status and, in practice, on external donor support rather than being guaranteed as a universal right.¹⁶ As such, many people in Moldova, being the poorest country in Europe, are facing significant affordability barriers and do not have access to modern contraceptives. Geographic divides exacerbate this inequality:

¹¹ Refworld: Moldova: National Program on Human Rights Enforcement 2024-2027. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (2024): Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in Moldova. Available at: <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Raport-privind-realizarea-Setului-de-masuri-pentru-implementarea-Observatiilor-finale-ale-Comitetului-ONU-pentru-eliminarea-discriminarii-impotriva-femeilor-CEDAW-pentru-2020-2023.pdf>.

¹² European Commission. (2024). Republic of Moldova 2024 Report. Republic of Moldova 2024 Report - Moldova Report 2024 - Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood.

¹³ United Nations Moldova. (2023). Moldova Comprehensive Gender Assessment. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099845106012227580/pdf/P178021013373d0290863b0733245563710.pdf>

¹⁴ Refworld Moldova. *National Program on Human Rights Enforcement 2024-2027. Moldova: National Program on Human Rights Enforcement 2024-2027*. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/policy/strategy/natlegbod/2024/en/148239>.

¹⁵ UNFPA Moldova. (2024). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the Republic of Moldova*. Available at: https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/serat_moldova_full_web_0.pdf.

¹⁶ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (2024): Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in Moldova. Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in Moldova.

the unmet need for family planning is significantly higher in rural areas (26.0%) than in urban centers (15.5%).¹⁷

Moreover, abortion services are generally provided on a fee-for-service basis and are not covered by CNAM, creating financial barriers for many women and adolescents. Furthermore, recent regulatory changes (Order No. 45/2025) have introduced restrictions on access to medical abortion via telemedicine, leaving it available only in crises.¹⁸ While telemedicine medical abortion was reintroduced into national clinical guidance, its use was limited to crisis and exceptional situations, thus restricting access for women living in rural areas, teenagers, and other groups facing barriers to timely in-person care.

Another factor preventing proper access to SRHR is the fragmentation of evidence-based sex education. While progress was made between 2017 and 2021, current programs match only 54% of international standards.¹⁹ Comprehensive sex education (CSE) continues to be tackled 2-3 years later than recommended; currently, only 9% of the curriculum for youth aged 15-18+ fully aligns with international CSE standards.²⁰

Recommendations:

- Amend laws to explicitly include modern contraception and safe abortion, including medical abortion, within the package financed by the National Health Insurance Company (CNAM).
- Establish permanent public funding for contraceptives and medical abortion supplies to end reliance on external donors and reposition the government's primary accountability toward its citizens. Modern contraceptives should be included in the National Essential Medicines List and made available to all individuals who lack sufficient financial resources.
- Legally mandate that CNAM finances these services through the Unified Programme to ensure they are treated as basic health entitlements.
- Transition from restricted coverage to cost-free access for the entire reproductive-age population, removing all financial barriers to essential care. Safe abortion services, which are currently provided on a fee-for-service basis, should also be covered by CNAM and offered free of charge.
- Ensure that medical abortion via telemedicine is available to all eligible women, in line with WHO recommendations, rather than being restricted to crisis and exceptional situations. Particular attention should be given to women living in rural areas and adolescents, who face disproportionate barriers to accessing in-person services.
- Improve the systematic collection and publication of disaggregated data (by age, disability, and geography) regarding SRHR service uptake to identify and address remaining inequalities.
- Institutionalise mandatory, evidence-based CSE across all educational levels to fulfil the state's direct obligation to its youth, independent of fluctuating donor support.
- Defined mandatory training standards for educators to ensure the delivery of high-quality SRHR education is a core competency of the national education system.

¹⁷ UPR Info (2022): Situation of Women Who Use Drugs, Women Sex Workers and Treatment Availability. Situation of Women Who Use Drugs, Women Sex Workers and Treatment Availability

¹⁸ Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova. (2025). *Order No. 45/2025 Regarding the amendment of Order No. 766/2020 "On the approval of the Standard regarding safe abortion"*. Available at: <https://ms.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/45-23.01.2025.pdf>.

¹⁹ UNFPA Moldova / Ministry of Education and Research. (2021). *Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the Republic of Moldova: Report assessing alignment with international standards*. Available at: https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/serat_moldova_full_web_0.pdf.

²⁰ UNFPA Moldova: Official Publication Page: Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Official Publication Page: Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

- Eliminate administrative hurdles that prevent accredited health professionals and CSOs from conducting specialised SRHR activities in schools.
- Expand non-formal SRHR programs to reach out-of-school youth and marginalised groups, ensuring no citizen is left behind by gaps in institutional coverage.

IV. SITUATION OF ROMA WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

(3rd cycle recommendations: 127.147; 127.148; 127.165; 127.150; 127.152; 127.202; 127.203; 127.204, possibly also (but broad): 127.157; 127.200; 127.206)

This section is based on community monitoring, case management, consultations and research conducted by organizations contributing to this joint submission, including the Association Roma

Women's Platform ROMNI, the Association of Roma Women and Girls “Moldsolidaritate”, and the Association Women for the Contemporary Society.

Despite progress in gender equality, Roma women and girls in Moldova continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, poverty, disability, place of residence, and for some, displacement or refugee status. These factors limit equal access to education, employment, healthcare, sexual and reproductive health services, protection, and meaningful participation in cultural, economic and public life.

Although Moldova has strengthened its legislative and policy framework on gender equality and violence against women, implementation remains uneven, particularly for Roma women and girls living in rural and socially excluded communities.

Evidence collected by the Roma Women’s Platform ROMNI in 2026 indicates that gender-based violence remains widespread but largely underreported. Women identified that lack of trust in institutions, economic dependence, community control, illiteracy, racial profiling, discrimination and stigma remain barriers to seeking assistance. Incidents where protection is required are frequently addressed through informal community mechanisms rather than state institutions, while patriarchal norms continue to limit the participation of Roma women and girls in family and community decision-making.

Field evidence collected by the AO Moldsolidaritate found that child, early, and forced marriages and reproductive violence remain among the most serious concerns affecting Roma women and girls. Roma Women Platform ROMNI case management data collected between 2023 and 2026 indicate that approximately 80% of the 110 documented gender-based violence cases involved reproductive violence. These practices contribute to school dropout, early pregnancy, migration of extended families, domestic violence, and long-term social exclusion.

Educational and digital exclusion remain significant barriers for Roma girls. Poverty, family expectations, limited educational support, and gender stereotypes often prevent girls from continuing education beyond lower secondary school. Respondents also highlighted the lack of Roma women role models, career guidance, and equal access to digital technologies.

Discrimination and anti-Roma sentiments continue to affect access to employment and public services. Some women conceal their Roma identity to improve employment opportunities.

Roma women and girls displaced from Ukraine face additional barriers, including language and cultural obstacles, poverty, illiteracy, social isolation, and limited access to services. In some displaced Roma communities, child and early marriages and early pregnancies remain a concern.

The Association Women for the Contemporary Society reports that Roma women returning voluntarily to Moldova after trafficking, domestic violence, or migration often lack access to housing, employment, healthcare, and long-term reintegration support. Without comprehensive reintegration programs, many remain at increased risk of renewed exploitation, gender-based violence, and re-trafficking.

Recommendations:

- Recognise anti-Roma prejudice as a specific form of racism and strengthen measures to combat discrimination against Roma women and girls.
- Prevent and eliminate child, early, and forced marriages through coordinated prevention, protection, and accountability measures.
- Improve access to quality education, healthcare, sexual and reproductive health, and culturally appropriate GBV services.
- Expand specialised support services for Roma women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- Ensure the meaningful participation of Roma women and their organizations in policymaking, implementation, and monitoring.
- Recognise reproductive violence as a form of gender-based violence and strengthen the capacity of relevant professionals to identify and respond to it.
- Develop long-term reintegration programs for Roma women survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, including housing, employment, psychosocial support, and legal assistance.
- Promote digital inclusion for Roma women and girls by expanding access to technology, enhancing digital literacy, and ensuring safe digital public services.

V. SITUATION OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

(3rd cycle recommendations: 127.190; 127.191; 127.193; broad 127.157)

The national legislation lacks explicit definitions for “underrepresented group” and “multiple vulnerabilities.” This omission hinders the effective regulation and holistic support of individuals facing intersecting vulnerabilities. For instance, a woman with disabilities experiencing domestic violence is often primarily addressed as a person with disabilities, rather than as a victim of domestic violence whose experience is shaped by both factors. In contrast, international frameworks like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) utilize the concepts of ‘underrepresented’ and “disadvantaged”, which inherently encompass the diverse vulnerabilities faced by individuals with intersectional identities. In this respect, it is recommended to amend the legislation to introduce the definition. It's crucial to note that “field-specific” laws and strategies often fail to adequately integrate an intersectional approach, overlooking the compounded vulnerabilities faced by individuals with multiple marginalized identities. For example, the Law on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities mentions women with disabilities only sporadically, primarily focusing on their sexual and reproductive rights and neglecting a broader range of issues affecting women with disabilities.

Moreover, the Law on Providing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men overlooks women from underrepresented groups, such as women with disabilities and Roma women.

Progress comes with the new draft of the [National Program on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for 2026-2030](#)²¹, which mainstreams gender equality to a larger extent than the previous one. For example, the new draft Program mentions specifically women with disabilities in relation to employment, entrepreneurship, and combating gender-based violence.

Women with disabilities face gender-specific discrimination in healthcare, specifically related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The scarcity of gynecological examination chairs suitable for women with physical disabilities severely hinders the ability to provide necessary services. As such, 18.3% of women with disabilities aged 15-49 experience unmet family planning needs, a higher percentage than the 16.3% of women without disabilities, regardless of sexual activity. The right of all persons with disabilities of marriageable age to freely and fully consent to founding a family is thus not yet fully realized. Additionally, people with disabilities report lower motivation and desire to have children, both generally and in the near future, compared to their non-disabled peers. This is likely influenced by poorer health status and limited access to essential family planning support services, as well as by the process of raising and [caring for a child](#)²². Moreover, the current national legal framework lacks prohibitions of forced sterilization and forced abortion, in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.

Political participation of women with disabilities is encouraged, although the statistical data on their representation in elected positions is missing. For example, if there have been public declarations on elected women with disabilities after the 2019 local elections, stipulating that 8 women with disabilities ran for election and 6 were elected as local councillors, there is no data for the 2023 local elections.

Women with disabilities face barriers when being involved in the labor market or in income-generating activities. Three out [of every ten](#)²³ women with disabilities in Moldova have had difficulty in employment and/or lost their job or source of income. [A 2023 study](#)²⁴ examined the barriers faced by women with disabilities in business and self-employment. While women with disabilities primarily engage in agriculture (36.9%), industry (26.1%), trade (20.7%), and services (12.9%), most respondents (71.1%) believe they face greater challenges in starting and running businesses than men with disabilities. Key barriers include limited access to resources, such as finances, organizational support, and relevant information, due to a lack of awareness and complex bureaucratic procedures. Accessibility challenges also pose significant obstacles, as well as limited access to both general and vocational education opportunities. The study highlights a critical need for improved accessibility, including adapting infrastructure, technology, and services to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs with disabilities. Developing and implementing tailored support services to address the unique challenges

²¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. (2026). *Draft Government Decision on the approval of the National Program for the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities for the years 2026–2030*. Available at: <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/se-plaseaza-spre-consultare-publica-proiectul-hotararii-guvernului-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-programului-national-de-incluziune-sociala-a-persoanelor-cu-dizabilitati-pentru-anii-2026-2030/10833>.

²² Ibid.

²³ UNDP. (2023). *Women with disabilities remain vulnerable to discrimination and poverty, UN Women and UNDP survey finds*. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/moldova/press-releases/women-disabilities-remain-vulnerable-discrimination-and-poverty-un-women-and-undp-survey-finds>

²⁴ Association of Entrepreneurs with Disabilities of Moldova (AEFL). (2024). *Identification of Problems and Obstacles Faced by Women with Disabilities in Business*. Available at: https://www.cipe.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/AEFL-Report_english_final.pdf.

women with disabilities face in entrepreneurship is crucial. Increasing awareness about available resources and support programs among women with disabilities is also essential. Addressing systemic barriers, such as simplifying bureaucratic processes and improving access to finance, is equally important.

[A 2025 study](#)²⁵ revealed that women with disabilities are frequently exposed to violence, with 96.3% of respondents reporting victimization. Multiple forms of violence were reported, with psychological or emotional abuse being the most common (92.6%), followed by physical (59.3%) and economic (55.6%) violence. A significant proportion also experienced spiritual (33.3%) and sexual (25.9%) violence. A critical issue identified is the significant difficulty women with disabilities face in seeking help. The majority (51.9%) reported that their disability impeded their ability to do so due to physical, social, and informational barriers.

Data on the specific types of disabilities experienced by survivors of gender-based violence is currently unavailable. However, women with intellectual disabilities are likely to encounter significant barriers in preventing and combating abuse. In a recent case conducted by the [European Court of Human Rights](#)²⁶, a woman with psycho-emotional disabilities was effectively trafficked from an institution into a domestic setting, where she endured repeated rape and forced labor. The state authorities failed to monitor her situation adequately, and the judicial response was deeply inadequate. These failures highlight the urgent need for systemic reform and dedicated support services tailored to persons with disabilities, including accessible shelters and disability-sensitive legal assistance.

Recommendations:

- Amend Law No. 5/2006 and the Law on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities to explicitly recognize intersectional and multiple discrimination, including by defining “underrepresented groups”, “disadvantaged groups”, and “multiple or intersecting vulnerabilities”.
- Guarantee accessible, affordable, and non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls with disabilities.
- Explicitly prohibit forced sterilization and forced abortion in national legislation and establish effective safeguards to guarantee the free, prior, and informed consent of women and girls with disabilities in all sexual and reproductive healthcare decisions.
- Adopt and adequately fund a comprehensive national response to violence against women and girls with disabilities, including accessible shelters, crisis services, legal aid, psychological support, personal assistance, supported decision-making, and accessible reporting mechanisms.

²⁵ AEFL Moldova and Parteneriatul Aleselor Locale Pentru Sprijunul Comunitar. (2025). *Femeile cu Dizabilitati din Moldova: Victime Invizibile pentru lege si Societate*. Available at: https://anpcv.gov.md/sites/default/files/2025-05/RAPORT%20Femeile%20cu%20Dizabilit%C4%83%C8%9Bi%20din%20Moldova_%20Victime%20Invizibile%20pentru%20Lege%20%C8%99i%20Societate_AEFL%20MOLDOVA..

²⁶ Council of Europe, „European Court of Human Rights affirms states' duty to protect persons with intellectual disabilities from human trafficking in *I.C. v. the Republic of Moldova* judgment” (06.03.2025), Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking/-/european-court-of-human-rights-affirms-states-duty-to-protect-persons-with-intellectual-disabilities-from-human-trafficking-in-i.c.-v.-the-republic-of-moldova-judgment-1>

VI. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT- CHILDCARE SERVICES AND PAY GAP

(3rd cycle recommendations: 127.158; 127.160-163; 127.165)

The year 2022 was a significant milestone for childcare in the Republic of Moldova with the adoption of [Law No. 367/2022 on alternative childcare services](#)²⁷. This law introduced three types of alternative childcare services for children under the age of three: alternative childcare services organized by employers at the workplace, individualized alternative childcare services, and family-type alternative childcare services. These services are intended to complement, not replace, early childhood education and preschool institutions, and are not considered forms of social assistance.

While the reform ensured a legal environment conducive to expanding childcare and supporting women's labor market participation, comprehensive national data on the number of services established remain unavailable, as implementation has largely been supported by initiatives from civil society organizations, development partners, universities, and private employers. Based on publicly available information, at least 30 family-based childcare services have been established with the support of civil society organizations, including at least 19 family-based childcare facilities supported by the [Centre Partnership for Development](#)²⁸ and at least 9 additional family-based childcare facilities supported by [the Association for Women Entrepreneurs from Moldova](#)²⁹. In addition, several employers have established workplace childcare facilities, including [Orange Moldova](#)³⁰, whose childcare space is expected to benefit approximately 600 employees' children, while [three additional companies](#)³¹ received support to establish family-friendly childcare spaces in the workplace. Child-friendly spaces have also been created in [Moldova State University](#)³² and the [Alec Russo State University of Bălți](#)³³. Furthermore, civil society organizations have launched [training programs to professionalize home-based childcare providers](#)³⁴; however, no official statistics are available regarding the number of licensed professional caregivers operating under the new legal framework. The absence of consolidated national data on the

²⁷ Law No. 367 of December 29, 2022 on alternative child care services, Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135587&lang=ro

²⁸ Partnership for Development Center, "Do you want to open a family-style daycare? Our program offers the support and funding you need!", Available at: <https://progen.md/doresti-sa-deschizi-o-cresa-de-tip-familial-programul-nostru-iti-ofera-suportul-si-finantarea-de-care-ai-nevoie/>

²⁹ Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Moldova, Tatiana Pascal: "I want to help women with young children by opening a family-style daycare. I know how much they need this kind of help." (26.04.2024), Available at: <https://afam.md/ru/tatiana-pascal-vreau-sa-ajut-femeile-care-au-copii-mici-deschizand-cresa-de-tip-familial-stiu-cat-de-mult-au-nevoie-de-astfel-de-ajutor/>

³⁰ Orange Moldova, „Orange Moldova has inaugurated the first childcare facility for employees' children”, (17.04.2024), Available at: <https://www.orange.md/ro/noutate/orange-moldova-a-inaugurat-primul-spatiu-de-ingrijire-a-copiilor-angajatilor-17-04-2024>

³¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Press Release, „Four companies will create family-friendly spaces in the workplace” (27.04.2022), Available at: <https://social.gov.md/comunicare/comunicate/patru-companii-vor-crea-spatii-prietenoase-familiei-la-locul-de-munca/>

³² State University of Moldova, „The USM Family-Friendly Center has been inaugurated – Children grow. Parents work and study.” (20.03.2025), Available at: <https://usm.md/?p=36245>

³³ United Nations Moldova Press Release, "Two Child-Friendly Spaces Opened at Alec Russo State University of Bălți to Support Student and Staff Parents" (31.10.2025), Available at: <https://moldova.un.org/en/304476-two-child-friendly-spaces-opened-alecu-russo-state-university-b%4%83l%C8%9Bi-support-student-and>

³⁴ Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Press Release „Individuals caring for children up to the age of 3 will receive support to formalize their activity” (2023), Available at: <https://social.gov.md/comunicare/comunicate/persoanele-care-ingrijesc-copii-cu-varsta-de-pana-la-3-ani-vor-beneficia-de-suport-pentru-a-si-formaliza-activitatea/>

establishment and functioning of alternative childcare services limits the ability to assess the implementation and impact of these reforms.

When it comes to the gender pay gap, [the most recent data](#)³⁵ show it has reached its highest level in recent years. Hence, in 2024 the gender wage gap was 16.6%, which amounts to an increase of 1.0% relative to the measured 15.6% in 2023. This disparity might be explained by the fact that, within the last two years, the number of employed women has increased significantly, especially those with young children. These women often opt for part-time employment or positions that allow them to balance professional life with care responsibilities, with implications for salary and wages. This inequality in relation to men is further amplified by occupational segregation, the concentration of women in lower-paid sectors, limited access to management positions, and discriminatory practices.

According to the same study, data on the gender pension gap indicate a similar inequality. In 2025, the gender pension gap was 16.3%. This evolution reflects several structural factors. First, a pension is directly correlated with contributions paid throughout working life, and women have, on average, lower salaries and more fragmented contribution periods, generated by childcare leaves or temporary withdrawals from the labor market. Secondly, occupational segregation determines the concentration of women in lower-paid sectors or in executive positions/functions, which subsequently translates into lower pension calculation bases.

Recommendations:

1. Promote employer-supported, family-friendly policies by introducing incentives for employers to establish workplace childcare services and adopt flexible working arrangements, parental support measures, and other family-friendly policies.
2. Address the structural causes of the gender pension gap by recognizing and mitigating the impact of unpaid care responsibilities on women's lifetime earnings and pension entitlements.

VII. ACCESS TO SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (3rd cycle recommendations: 127.164; 127.168-185; 127.188)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is still a critical human rights issue in the Republic of Moldova today. Despite Moldova's ratification of the Istanbul Convention and adoption of 23 related UPR recommendations, the reality for many women and girls is insufficient. In 2025, authorities investigated 1,045 domestic violence reports and opened 850 criminal cases. Persistent violence, systemic barriers, and institutional weaknesses continue to block survivors' access to justice, protection, and rehabilitation. Without urgent investment, inclusive policymaking, and recognition of intersectional vulnerabilities, survivors remain at risk.³⁶

Moldova has taken commendable legislative steps. Indeed, laws have been strengthened to criminalize domestic violence and create prevention and victim support mechanisms consistent with international

³⁵ Partnership for Development Center, „The Cost of the Wage Gap in 2025. How do women lose the equivalent of several average salaries each year?” (Chisinau, 2026), Available at: https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/CPD_Pay-gap-2026.pdf

³⁶ Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Moldova. (2026). *Report on the activity of the Prosecutor's Office for 2025*. Available at: <https://www.procuratura.md/sites/default/files/2026-03/1-1-raportul-de-activitate-procuratura-2025.pdf>.

obligations (Previous UPR Recommendations 127.168-127.185). These reforms aim to break cycles of violence and enable GBV survivors to seek justice without fear or stigma. Nonetheless, significant gaps persist between law and practice.

Data provided by women-led civil society organizations reveal multiple persistent barriers. GBV survivors face stigma, fear of retaliation, and distrust of law enforcement and judicial bodies, severely limiting reporting and timely interventions. Investigations often experience delays, with critical evidence (medical, psychological, or legal) frequently poorly documented. Weak multidisciplinary cooperation, insufficient sustainable funding for specialized survivor services, and uneven distribution of assistance disproportionately impact rural and marginalized groups, including Roma women and women with disabilities.³⁷

Since its last review, the Republic of Moldova has made efforts to strengthen the right to rehabilitation for victims of GBV and torture. This has been done by: proposing a draft amendment to the Law on rehabilitation of victims of crimes No. 137/2016 (1); adopting the program for the creation and development of the National Referral Mechanism („MNRV”) for protection and assistance of crime victims for the years 2022-2026 (2); and adopting the Action plan for the years 2022-2024 on its implementation (GD no.182/2022) (3).

Although the recent revisions of Law no. 137/2016³⁸ are partially in line with the recommendations by the Council of Europe, EU Directive 2012/29, and Recommendation CM (2023)2, the law continues to fall short in providing victims of GBV with means of rehabilitation, as access to long-term support services remains reliant on the victim's procedural status in criminal proceedings. This conditionality is incompatible with the CAT General Comment No. 3 and the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation, which hold that the victim's claim to reparation and rehabilitation should not be dependent on the conclusion of a criminal proceeding and that victim status exists regardless of whether the perpetrator of the violation is identified, apprehended, prosecuted, or convicted. According to Law 137/2016, in emergencies, services may be provided temporarily for a limited period of 45 days, with a possible extension of 15 days. This is insufficient for victims of GBV, whose recovery often requires months or years of medical, psychological, social, and legal support.

A critical limitation relates to Law No. 137/2016³⁹, which excludes state budget financing for rehabilitation services provided to victims of GBV, making specialized organizations heavily donor-dependent and threatening sustainability. Promising government initiatives face slow implementation, leaving GBV victims marginalized. Women-led civil society organizations have therefore been essential, filling gaps left by the state. For example, RCTV Memoria, part of the Platform for Gender Equality, provides comprehensive rehabilitation services for GBV survivors. This includes creating important

³⁷ Zaslaveț, A., Popovici, L., & Poțing, L. (2022). *Prevention and management of gender-based violence cases: Practical guide for local multidisciplinary teams*. RCTV Memoria. Available at: https://memoria.md/files/publicatii/Ghiduri%20si%20publicatii/Ghid%20Practic%20pentru%20Echipele%20multidisciplinare%20Prevenirea%20si%20Combaterea%20VBG_2022.pdf.

³⁸ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. (2016, July 29). *Law No. 137 on the rehabilitation of victims of crime* (Law No. 137/2016). *Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova*, Nos. 293–305, Item 618. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=139012&lang=ro.

³⁹ The Analise report of the Law 137/2016 for the rehabilitation of victims of crime from Moldova, Author. Dr. Christa Pelikan and Arina Țurcan-Donțu. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/raport-de-analiza-a-legii-nr-137-cu-privire-la-reabilitarea-victimelor/1680b1c8e0>

medico-psychological Evaluation and Finding Reports (Medical Files) under the Istanbul Protocol, which ensures access to justice and rehabilitation. For example, between 2022 and 2025, they assisted and documented the after-effects of GBV for 318 victims and issued a total of 19 Evaluation and Finding Reports to support access to justice in national and international courts. However, persistent funding cuts, linked to the reduction of U.S. foreign material assistance in 2025, highlighted the urgent need for stable public funding of GBV services.⁴⁰

Digital violence is an emerging, serious form of GBV in Moldova, as technology-facilitated harassment further complicates protections. Marginalized communities experience layered discrimination and are often overlooked in mainstream policy. A national sociological study on “Digital Violence Against Women in the Republic of Moldova”⁴¹ found that 12.0% of adults who use the digital environment in the Republic of Moldova are victims of at least one form of digital violence, while the most prevalent forms of digital violence are those aimed at controlling identity and digital access (the use of identity/creating a fake account (14.6% cumulatively) and password theft/accessing accounts or devices (13.6% cumulatively)).

The Moldovan government’s acceptance of numerous recommendations during the third UPR cycle demonstrates political will, yet partial implementation shows urgent systemic reforms are required.

Recommendations:

- Secure sustainable public funding for comprehensive GBV survivor services, expanding medical, psychological, and social rehabilitation services,
- Provide all victims of GBV, including victims of digital violence, with full rehabilitation and restoration means through a comprehensive approach integrating medical, psychological, legal, and social services, in accordance with Articles 11 - 15 and Article 14 of the UN Convention Against Torture (CAT/C/GC/3⁴²).
- Amend the Law No. 137/2016 to adequately reflect the realities and needs of GBV survivors, ensuring access to long-term rehabilitation services regardless of their involvement in criminal proceedings (aligned with CAT/C/GC/3, Recommendation CM (2023)2, and EU Directive 2012/29).

VIII. COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

(3rd cycle recommendations: 127.22; 127.23; 127.123; broad: 127.157)

At present, cooperation between the Moldovan government and civil society organizations in the Republic of Moldova could still be improved. Although the government has taken positive steps to involve civil society organizations in consultation processes, such participation often remains formal

⁴⁰ RCTV Memoria, *Annual Activity Reports 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025*. Available at: <https://www.memoria.md/en/publicatii>.

⁴¹ Cheianu-Andrei, D. (2026). *Digital violence against women in the Republic of Moldova*. International Center La Strada. Available at: <https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2date26-date5/Digital%20Violence%20against%20Women%20in%20RM%20-%20full%20-%20ENG.pdf>.

⁴² Committee against Torture. (2012, December 13). *General comment No. 3 (2012): Implementation of article 14 by States parties* (CAT/C/GC/3). Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/catcgc3-general-comment-no-3-2012-implementation>.

and surface-level and is not consistently translated into meaningful cooperation in implementing laws, policies, and referral mechanisms. This adds strain to an environment for women human rights defenders that is already under pressure. The documented experience of the Association Women for the Contemporary Society confirms this, showing that civil society organizations that deliver specialized legal aid and direct assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings and gender-based violence continue to face institutional barriers, insufficient attention to their expertise, and limited involvement in multidisciplinary case management. This not only weakens coordinated victim protection but also reduces the effectiveness of legal assistance. Moreover, it limits the contribution of specialized civil society organizations to the implementation and monitoring of national policies, thereby excluding significant perspectives and insights into the topic. These viewpoints are significant, as human rights defenders often have first-hand experience with victims of human rights violations and situations in which those violations occur. At times, women human rights defenders are even themselves victims of such violations. Reflecting this is the societal backlash women human rights defenders have received when publishing their views. A concerning example are the derogatory, misogynistic, and violent comments inciting violence on social media following public coverage of the 11th edition of the Feminist March in 2025 in Chisinau - an event in which most of the civil society organizations from the Platform for Gender Equality participated. These expressions targeted participating women human rights defenders and the slogans that were being used in the march.⁴³

In light of this, we consider the recommendations that ensure effective collaboration and consultation with civil society organizations (127.22, 127.23, 127.123) to be partially implemented.

Recommendations:

- Establish formal mechanisms for meaningful cooperation with specialized civil society organizations throughout the implementation and monitoring of policies and assistance for beneficiaries.
- Ensure the systematic participation of specialized NGOs in multidisciplinary case management and referral mechanisms.
- Strengthen the protection of women human rights defenders and recognize women-led organizations as key partners in ensuring access to justice and victim protection.

⁴³ Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM). (2025). *Radiography of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova*, p. 53-54. Available at: <https://crjm.org/en/radiography-of-attacks-on-civil-society-organizations-and-human-rights-defenders-in-the-republic-of-moldova-in-2025/29075/>.

ANNEX 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATFORM FOR GENDER EQUALITY (PEG) AND CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SUBMISSION, MEMBERS OF PEG

1. Description of the Platform for Gender Equality

The Platform for Gender Equality (PEG) is a voluntary association of individuals and NGOs that act as a unified voice for active promotion of gender equality. The platform was launched on 19th of June, 2015. Currently, it has 62 members and it is still open to new members. PEG promotes and defends gender equality and social justice, contributing to the creation of an equitable and inclusive society by building member capacity, mobilizing communities, and influencing public policy, as well as by promoting gender equality in the public, professional, and personal spheres through the improvement of the legislative framework and the enforcement and monitoring of its implementation. In a short period of time, the Platform managed to establish itself and become an important voice within the field of gender equality.

2. Contributors, members of PEG:

- **Cristina Snegur**, LL.M. - human rights expert, Chair of the Platform for Gender Equality
- **Elena Rațoi** - expert on gender equality and social inclusion
- **Gender-Centru** - A non-governmental organization active in research and training, specializing in gender equality and development. Founded in 1998 and officially registered as an NGO in 2000, the organization brings together a multidisciplinary team of experts, teachers, psychologists, lawyers, journalists, dedicated to promoting women's rights and social equity in the Republic of Moldova. Gender-Centru promotes gender equality as a fundamental principle of democracy, contributing to the development of an inclusive society free from discrimination and violence. Through research, education, and advocacy, it supports equitable public policies and provides support to vulnerable communities.
- **Keystone Moldova** - A non-governmental organisation founded in 2004. Its work covers social inclusion for children and adults with disabilities, their families, and other people at risk of exclusion. The teams run community services: family support, foster care, personal assistance, and help for people who leave residential institutions. Teachers and local officials also get training, so that children with disabilities can study in ordinary schools. Inside the Gender Budget Watchdog Network (GBWN), the organisation checks how national and local budgets answer the needs of women and men, and of groups the budgets often miss, such as women with disabilities.
- **Platform of Roma Women in Moldova „Romni”** (Platforma Femeilor Rome din Moldova „Romni”) - A non-governmental organization that actively advocates for the rights of Roma women and girls, campaigning against early marriage and promoting education, social inclusion, and gender equality.

The organization provides direct support to the community and is frequently involved in projects related to inclusion, access to justice, and civic representation.

- **Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims „Memoria”** (Centrul de Reabilitare a Victimelor Torturii/ RCTV „Memoria”) - A non-profit, apolitical and independent organization that is the first and so far the only comprehensive rehabilitation center for victims of torture and inhuman and/or degrading treatment in Moldova, gender-based violence victims, and to Moldovan citizens as well as to refugees and asylum seekers in Moldova, through a multidisciplinary approach: medical, psychosocial and legal services provided for victims.
- **Reproductive Health Training Center/ RHTC** (Centrul de Instruire în Domeniul Sănătății Reproductive/ CIDSR) - A non-profit, non-governmental organization, founded in 1998, with the mission to protect and promote reproductive and sexual health and rights of people. The main directions of activities of the RHTC are: 1. Capacity building of service providers and community members in reproductive health issues; 2. Development, scientific justification and implementation of community members' and doctors' training programs in reproductive health; 3. Implementation of cost-efficient technologies, recommended by WHO, concerning pregnancy interruption, the concept of “patient-centered system” in the reproductive health services providing system.
- **Roma Women Network "Moldsolidaritate"** (Rețeaua Femeilor Rome „Moldsolidaritate”) - a non-governmental organization, registered with the Ministry of Justice on March 6, 2001 and which was created to defend the interests of Roma women in the Republic of Moldova. The organization currently operates throughout the country, providing support to the target group both at home, through cooperation with local public authorities, and through the creation of public policies at the national level in collaboration with government officials.
- **Women for the Contemporary Society Association** (Asociația „Femeia pentru Societate Contemporană”) - a non-profit organization founded by a group of professional women from the Republic of Moldova with the aim of creating a model of multidisciplinary collaboration within the community to address the needs of women and girls, adolescents and young people, migrant women working abroad, domestic workers, women and girls with disabilities, and female victims of crime. The association focuses its activities on preventing forms of violence that place women and girls at particularly high risk, such as gender-based violence. It provides assistance, counseling, and solutions for the community it serves.
- **Youth Wave** - a public association based in Ungheni, Republic of Moldova and registered in March 2025. The organization is located at the Ungheni Municipal Youth Center. The organization uses participatory art, peer-to-peer education, and civic activism as primary tools to prevent and combat violence and stereotypes among adolescents. These activities promote empathy, non-violence, and gender equality, providing adolescents and refugees with a safe space to prevent emotional abuse and discrimination.