

This Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing is the outcome of a project designed to help the Republic of Moldova translate the internationally-agreed policy agenda on ageing into a concrete way forward relevant to the country's own circumstances. It provides a number of recommendations and suggests actions for addressing ageing issues in the country.

Key findings of the Road Map

The principal theme running through the Road Map is that genuine progress in 'mainstreaming ageing' must look beyond the simplicity of numbers; numbers of persons in certain age groups, numbers entitled to and drawing pensions, numbers of working-age people migrating out of the country. A successful approach to ageing as conceptualized in the Madrid International Plan of Action (MIPAA) and its UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) entails thinking about the needs, rights and contributions of older people in education, economic and social engagement, health and all other policy arenas. It also entails recognizing that ageing is a lifelong process so that health, educational and economic circumstances at all stages of life affect the eventual situation of older persons. The Republic of Moldova has taken great strides in recognizing the implications of population ageing and migration for the financial stability of the social welfare system, for example, and has invested significant effort in developing pension reforms and bilateral agreements around migration. Yet success will depend upon the country also addressing the subtler aspects of ageing related to housing, adult education or cultural participation, to give just a few examples.

To 'look beyond numbers' also means to go further than only enumerating facts, striving instead to monitor and evaluate their meaning. One of the key findings of the Road Map is that the Republic of Moldova has a well-advanced basis for the collection of statistics, but that this is not yet matched by an equally comprehensive framework for systematic monitoring and evaluation, integrated into policies from the outset. The Road Map therefore calls for both a strengthening of the institutional framework for policies relating to all of the MIPAA/RIS commitments and efforts to improve national capacities for designing, implementing and monitoring them.

Other recommendations of the Road Map

Improved integration of older persons in society requires measures to pro-actively facilitate their participation in social, cultural and political life, taking advantage of and promoting public, private and non-governmental initiatives as well as self-help networks and volunteers. Perceptions and images of ageing and older persons need to be monitored and, where necessary, challenged. The participation of all stakeholders in policymaking should be enhanced and safeguarded: the voices of all age groups should be heard in the formulation of policies that affect them, while the interests of the private sector, trade unions and civil society should also be considered.

Planned reforms of the social assistance system must be thoroughly enacted to ensure the equitability, clarity and sustainability of pensions and other benefits over the long term as the population of Moldova ages. National development plans, structural reforms and any future crisis management measures – as well as efforts to evaluate any of these – should specifically consider impacts on older persons within their assessments of effects on vulnerable groups.

In the labour market, explicit ageism is the most obvious but not necessarily the most insidious challenge. In addition, the Road Map calls for flexible working arrangements and adaptability of work environments to allow workers to remain in the labour force as long as they are willing and able to do so, enabling the economy to capitalize on their productivity while they benefit from the right to determine their own exit from the labour force. Provision of information and transparency are key factors here, as elsewhere.

Migration is of particular importance for Moldova, and is closely linked with the topic of ageing for a variety of reasons. Emigration of younger working-age people creates challenges for older persons and children remaining in the country, as well as for the social protection system that must safeguard them from poverty. Meanwhile the current and future coverage of both documented and undocumented migrants by social protection schemes abroad and in Moldova must be clearly defined so that pension accruals are recognized and honoured. Improvements in the registration of migrants, projection methods for estimating future migratory flows, and incentives for return migration are all called for.

The educational system must adjust to the inevitability of population ageing in a variety of ways; ensuring that teachers of all ages are recruited, well trained and fairly remunerated; raising awareness of age diversity amongst teachers and pupils; and fostering opportunities for learning beyond the formal school system, throughout the life course.

The health and well-being of older persons needs to be better assessed and protected, with a closer integration of health and social care and an increased level of attention to the specific needs of older persons in the training of medical personnel. Efforts at de-stigmatizing institutional care must be accompanied by recognition of the role of informal caregivers.

The Road Map recommends renewed attention to the housing conditions of older people, including considerations of accessibility, sanitation, energy supply and affordability, and suggests that standards be developed for new housing and for retrofitting existing housing.

Intergenerational solidarity is highlighted as a key element in successful mainstreaming of ageing. Fostering community-based interactions between generations, and monitoring perceptions of intergenerational justice, are suggested means of achieving such solidarity. Ensuring the proper recognition and social protection of informal carers of all ages, and especially of older people caring for the children of emigrants, will help to engender a sense of equity between generations.

The Road Map recognizes Moldova's significant capacities in data collection, but recommends additional focus on age-disaggregated data, regular reviews of household surveys for ageing-related content, and the building of capacities for analysis of collected data through the lens of MIPAA/RIS. Policy analysis for monitoring and evaluation is highlighted as a necessary step beyond the collection of data. Development of national capacities in demography and ageing is recommended.

Future directions

The Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing in Moldova is designed to guide the country through the inevitability of continued population ageing while ensuring that the commitments of MIPAA/RIS are upheld, and that older people receive the same opportunities for well-being and participation in society as all other members of the population. Mainstreaming ageing takes time—unlike some other national strategies and plans, the recommendations contained in this Road Map cannot be viewed in terms of two or three years, since they involve complex objectives such as changing perceptions and stereotypes, and systemic transformations in many sectors.

An action plan annexed to this Road Map provides a structured way forward, illustrating goals, actions and timelines; assigning responsibility for implementation of each goal; and identifying indicators for monitoring progress. Formulated in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family and other government agencies, it is hoped that this action plan will enable to Road Map to truly guide the way towards a society for all ages in Moldova.

STATEMENT FROM MOLDOVAN GOVERNMENT

**Statement made by Ms. Valentina Buliga,
Minister of Labour, Social Protection and Family of the Republic of Moldova**

By joining the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 (MIPAA), Republic of Moldova had assumed the responsibility to undertake actions for settling issues related to population aging and integration of elderly in national policies. The Regional Strategy Plan determines as well the main priorities emphasizing the need to promote measures for extending the participation of elderly people in the economic and social life, strengthening the relations between generations as a priority.

Undoubtedly, the framework policy approach should include the analysis of demographic aging subjects, both in terms of the impact on the social protection of the population system, as well as relating difficulties specific to aging. In the new vision of demographic changes, there is the need to bring the issues related to poverty of elderly people to the forefront, as a consequence of low level of income and pensions, failure of specialized medical services and lack of cheaper drugs for the elderly people, as well as a considerable decrease in the degree of their social integration, increased level of their isolation and withdrawal from community activities.

Given the country sustainable development priorities and the tendency for EU accession, in the best interest of the country, has been assumed the priority for demographic development and promotion of policies aimed at eliminating risks in human development areas. The policies include the strategic vision, highlighting the need to coordinate economic development related to dynamics, number and age structure of the population, which at the moment, unfortunately, is not denoting favorable characteristics for Moldova.

Without effective promotion of demographic policies, the recovery in the birth rate and changing the migration flows, experts are predicting significant changes in population structure, having an impact on the strategic and economic development, raising new demands and problems, in the view of adjusting to a more matured society.

Thus, for solving the problems caused by negative demographic trends in the country, by Government Decision nr.768 of 12 October 2011, has been approved the National Strategic Program in the field of Demographic Security of the Republic of Moldova (2011-2025). The Program outlines the actions aimed to ensure the demographic security, based on viable principles of sustainability and economic security, social cohesion and solidarity among generations.

It has been taken into consideration the fact that the adjustment to demographic aging societies, supposing the understanding by the society, that the increase in the share of the elderly population will create, firstly, a growing pressure on the social security systems and health care security schemes, on the offer on the labor market and the home care system, etc.

In this context, at the request of the Government and the initiative of the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, with the support of the UN (UNECE) Economic Commission for Europe, has been developed a Guide map for integrating aging policy in the development policies of the Republic of Moldova. In the process of elaboration and national consultations, the document has been coordinated with national counterparts and correlated to overall development policies, including the objectives of the National Strategic Program in the field of Demographic Security. The Guide map on aging includes the in depth assessment of the aging situation in the country, both in terms of conditions and the opportunities of the elderly people, as well as reflecting their problems in the existing policies. The assessment is realized in a participatory manner, involving consultation with a range of stakeholders, supplemented with the conclusions made through field missions, for a better knowledge of the reality, policies, institutions, data and existing researches.

This evaluation places Republic of Moldova in a unique position, undertaking a deep assessment and a contended analysis of the necessary measures to be included in plans for sustainable periods.

Certainly, through the implementation of the Guide map, will be increased the awareness raising (sensitized) of the entire society on the needs of the elderly people, being aware of the fact that an aging society requires the preparation for such kind of conditions, same as the conceptualization and reorientation of the future plans concerning population.

The purpose achieved through this document is aimed at elaborating recommendations for the improvement of compliance with the ten MIPAA commitments, which resume themselves for the insurance of the organic coverage of the aging issues in all political spheres, for the harmonization of the society and the economy in line with the demographic changes, for the development of an accessible society for all ages.

Thus, the aging topic will take a more solid based place on the strategy agenda for social and economic development and governance, as there is the political will for solving the demographic problems and the acquisition of aging problems. The list of operational documents concerning social areas, as pensions and health, confirm the fact that the Government is engaged to reduce poverty among old people and take care for their further social protection.

At the level of functional framework of governance, it will be introduced as well the normative act on institutionalization of the Guide map, in the view of implementation of the UNECE recommendations on policy guidelines on aging issues, which is planned to be approved by Government in 2012.

The main principle of these policies is based on the acceptance of the fact, that a state having a lot of old people does not mean a society composed of inactive people, consuming only the resources, but on the contrary, there is the need to reconsider the manpower of old people, to value their professional life and experience, both, for their families and for economic activity or/and the community. Consistently, it is needed to be created such conditions, which could allow the removal of all obstacles that bring to isolation and discrimination of old people.

On this occasion, we'd like to express our sincere gratitude to the UNECE Expert Team, who brought the financial and intellectual support, showing high professionalism in the elaboration of the Guide Map for integration of aging in the policy fields.

Especially, we would like to express sincere considerations to Mrs. Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, Chief of the UNECE Population Department, for her warm attitude, support and significant contribution in the elaboration of this project.

Faithfully yours,



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