

In 2008, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) established a Working Group on Ageing. This Working Group decided in its inaugural meeting that a key part of its work programme should be capacity-building activities in the form of national 'Road Maps for Mainstreaming Ageing'. UNECE member States may request participation in this exercise, the aim of which is to help countries to translate the internationally-agreed policy frameworks of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)<sup>1</sup> and its Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS)<sup>2</sup> into actions that take into consideration the specific national circumstances. These projects entail an in-depth appraisal of the ageing situation in a country, both in terms of the conditions and opportunities experienced by older persons, and in terms of prevailing policies. The assessment is performed in a participatory manner, involving consultation with the broadest possible range of stakeholders, and is complemented by a comprehensive desk review of existing policies and institutions, data and research from the country in question. The purpose of these investigations is to gauge the extent to which MIPAA and RIS are already being fulfilled in the country, and, most importantly, to develop recommendations for enhancing compliance with these internationally-established goals.

The first of the ten commitments of MIPAA/RIS is "to mainstream ageing in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages". Such mainstreaming is taken as the overarching goal, and as such the Road Maps consider ageing in all sectors; not only in the economic terms of financing pensions and health care, but also in the broader arena of lifelong learning, labour markets, intergenerational relationships, housing, quality of life, and participation in the social, cultural and political aspects of society.

The Republic of Moldova made a request, via its representative at the second meeting of the UNECE

Working Group on Ageing in November 2009, to be the second country to participate in the Road Map project (the first Road Map was completed in Armenia in 2010). Ms. Larisa Rotaru, the National Focal Point on Ageing for Moldova and the Moldovan representative on the UNECE Working Group on Ageing, was nominated as the national co-ordinator of the Road Map project, representing Moldova's Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF). This ministry, under the auspices of the National Commission on Population and Development, has been responsible for the development of a National strategic programme on demographic security for 2011-2025. The Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing is to be considered in conjunction with this strategy, focusing upon the ageing-related issues which are not highlighted in the main strategy document.

The present report presents the outcomes of the project and summarizes findings, so that they can be shared with other countries in the region. In this first section the project method is outlined and the different stages of its implementation are described. This is followed by a general introduction to the situation regarding ageing in Moldova, and then by an overview of relevant national policy documents, providing a picture of the overall policy framework relating to ageing in the country. The second major section summarizes observations made during the fact-finding missions and through the desk study, organized according to thematic areas identified during the field studies and in broad agreement with the topics covered by the commitments of MIPAA/RIS. The report concludes with a consideration of what lies ahead. A list of sources details the materials consulted and cited, as well as relevant legislation. The list of stakeholders interviewed, the questionnaire used during the fact-finding missions, and a detailed action plan developed by MLSPF are included as annexes.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations (2002)

<sup>2</sup> UNECE (2002)

## METHOD

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The Road Map exercise was carried out in several steps. Work began in early 2010 when the general goals and the framework of the exercise were discussed with partners in Moldova and the first reference documents were provided. A desk study was undertaken in which background documents were reviewed and tentative propositions regarding the ageing situation and the corresponding policy framework were developed, to be verified and elaborated upon during the field studies. In March 2010 the first field mission took place, during which extensive interviews and focus group discussions were carried out, covering more than 70 representatives from all identified stakeholder groups including several ministries, NGOs, the private sector, trade unions, academia, media and international organizations. A second field mission in June 2010 served to go into more detail on matters relating to monitoring and evaluation and to fill in remaining gaps. For details of those who participated in interviews and focus group discussions, see Annex II.

Semi-structured interviews were used to assess the general importance attributed to ageing-related policymaking in Moldova, as well as to identify views on specific laws and programmes and their implementation. Respondents were asked to describe good practice examples and to quantify progress and identify challenges. The interviews addressed instrumental issues such as institutional responsibilities, stakeholder participation and integration into international processes. They also explored substantive matters including integration of older persons in society; the image of older persons; health and well-being; social protection; sustainable economic growth; the labour market; education and lifelong learning; migration; gender; intergenerational solidarity; the research landscape; and monitoring and

evaluation. The guidelines used in interviewing are presented in Annex I. Whilst following the guidelines, interviews retained a certain degree of flexibility in order to take account of the interviewees' opinions as to what was most relevant. In addition, visits were made to an older peoples' home and to the gerontological centre, both in Chişinău. A visit to the Transnistrian region, including a discussion with the local authorities, helped to provide additional insights.

This report is based on the findings of both the desk and the field studies. A complete draft of the report was shared with a broad range of stakeholders – once again representing a variety of groups including ministries, NGOs, academics and UN resident agencies – during June 2011. A working group under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family was established to move the work of the Road Map forward, in particular by developing an action plan for implementation of the recommendations of the Road Map (see Annex III). Further desk research was undertaken in the light of new developments in 2011.

In parallel to the development of the Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing, a National Strategic Programme on demographic security for 2011-2025 has been prepared under the leadership of Moldova's National Commission on Population and Development. It is intended that the observations and recommendations of this Road Map should be viewed in parallel with the Strategic Programme, complementing it with a consideration of ageing which is not a central focus of the strategic programme. Viewed in concert, the Road Map and the National Strategic Programme on Demographic Security for 2011-2025 form a comprehensive approach to the population challenges currently faced by Moldova.

### **(a) Mainstreaming**

The Road Map for Mainstreaming Ageing reflects the principles defined in MIPAA and RIS. It is designed in the spirit of ‘mainstreaming ageing’ — a holistic approach that considers all fields of policymaking and all generations. This means that policies in all relevant sectors ranging from the economy and labour market to housing, transport, health and social protection systems should take population ageing and the needs of older persons into account. When devising laws, regulations, strategies or programmes, the consequences for older persons should be considered.

### **(b) Participatory approach**

Taking a participatory approach is imperative for developing effective and broadly acceptable policies which respond to the concerns of any specific group, including older persons. Such a participatory approach implies that representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups, including government, civil society, the private sector, trade unions, academia and the media are consulted and are involved in developing strategies which address the challenges of ageing societies while at the same time making the most of the opportunities they present. Older persons themselves should explicitly be included in decision-making processes on issues that concern them. In fact, all age groups need to be at the table when discussing issues of intergenerational relationships. Creating a society for all ages means that all age groups should have access to opportunities so that they can live fulfilled lives. At the societal level, there need not and should not be a trade-off between the interests of one generation and another. Reciprocity

and solidarity between generations is both desirable and possible. Broad participation in developing policies ensures their legitimacy and engenders widespread acceptance of their goals and methods.

### **(c) Life-course perspective**

Furthermore, it is important to pursue a life-course approach, recognizing that today’s younger generations will be the older generations of the future. The way younger people live today will greatly influence their quality of life as they grow older — in terms of health, knowledge and skills, and financial security, for example — whilst the policy environment in which younger people live equally affects their ability to prepare for successful and fulfilling older age. A life-course approach acknowledges that the ‘standard’ course of life, in which periods of study, work and retirement follow one another in sequence, is no longer universal and is gradually becoming less common. Periods of work may be intertwined with periods of retraining or caring for family members, successively or simultaneously. Enabling people to combine these elements more flexibly creates new possibilities for all generations. A life-course approach also emphasizes the important role of individual lifestyle choices, including healthy living and saving funds for older age.

When devising strategies in response to ageing in Moldova, these principles — mainstreaming, participatory policymaking, and a life-course perspective — must be borne in mind. These are the underlying principles of MIPAA and RIS that should guide policymaking at the country level.

**Table 1: Themes of the ten RIS commitments**

1.	Mainstreaming
2.	Participation
3.	Economic growth
4.	Social protection systems
5.	Labour markets
6.	Lifelong learning
7.	Quality of life: health and well-being
8.	Gender
9.	Intergenerational solidarity
10.	Regional cooperation



*Есть лишь одно  
страдание-быть одиноким.*

*Вы-не одиноки!!!*

There is only one tribulation – to be alone. You are not alone!

Alexei Dromashco (©)