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**ANNEX II**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the second Individual Measure in favour of the Republic of Moldova for 2021

**Action Document for EU4Reforms**

**ANNUAL MEASURE**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plans and measures in the sense of Article 23(3) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1. SYNOPSIS**

**1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title CRIS/OPSYS Basic Act</b>	EU4Reforms <i>Annual measure in favour of the Republic of Moldova for 2021</i> CRIS number: NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2021/43053 – OPSYS ACT-60606 linked to JAD.943389 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried in the Republic of Moldova
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027 for the Republic of Moldova <sup>1</sup>
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</b>	Priority area 2: Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	Population Policies/Programmes & Reproductive Health (130), Government & Civil Society-general (151), Conflict, Peace & Security (152)
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDGs: 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions; Secondary SDGs: 4 Quality education, 5 Gender equality, 10 Reduced inequalities
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	13010 – Population policy and administrative management 15 %

<sup>1</sup> To be adopted first half 2022

	15110 – Public sector policy and administrative management 50 % 15130 - Legal and judicial development 15 % 15152 – Legislatures and political parties 5 % 15153 – Media and free flow of information 10 % 15210 – Security system management and reform 5 %			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	42000 - European Commission			
<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Internal markers</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Digitalisation Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>2</sup> For the Neighbourhood, activities related to education shall be marked as part of the “Social Inclusion and Human Development” target, in line with the NDICI-GE programming guidelines.

	digital skills/literacy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital services		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<u>Connectivity</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tags: transport		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	people2people		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	energy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital connectivity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### BUDGET INFORMATION

<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line: 14.020111 Eastern Neighbourhood Total estimated cost: EUR 27 000 000 <sup>3</sup> Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 27 000 000
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### MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

<b>13. Type of financing and implementation modality(ies)</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through: - Grants - Procurement <b>Indirect management</b> with the entrusted entities to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.3
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## 1.2. Summary of the action

In light of the priority areas of EU assistance in Moldova as included in the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for the Republic of Moldova, this action aims to further implement the EU-Moldova Association Agreement with a focus on relevant reforms in the area of governance, highlighting the importance of the rule of law, the role of parliament in a democratic society, justice, improving public administration structures and security. Governance is directly linked to sustainable economic development. Legal certainty and functioning democratic institutions are key to attracting investment, supporting political stability, ensuring human rights and rule of law reforms. These efforts are in line with the Association Agenda 2021-2027 (to be adopted), the Economic Recovery Plan for Moldova, and the 2 July 2021 Joint Staff Working Document on post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities<sup>4</sup> with its Economic and Investment Plan and five Flagship initiatives for Moldova will support Moldova in the implementation of EU-related commitments by advancing reforms in the area of governance and security.

This action will support the Republic of Moldova in the implementation of reforms linked to the EU-Moldova Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and Association Agenda 2021-2027 with a particular focus on the following topics:

<sup>3</sup> The budget for this action may increase subject to the allocation of umbrella funds

<sup>4</sup> SWD(2021) 186 final

- A continuation of the High Level Adviser’s Mission will provide support to central and local public authorities including to help build capacity within the government which is instrumental for the efficient and effective implementation of the Association Agreement and Association Agenda.
- Strengthen the Parliament’s oversight functions and its institutional capacities, based on its clear commitment to reforms and to legislative approximation and implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement/DCFTA. Support will also be offered in view of a comprehensive review of the electoral legislative framework in line with outstanding OSCE/ODHIR recommendations.
- Enhancing the capacity and accountability of the justice sector at various levels, including through increased technical assistance to support the implementation of reforms.
- Support for the implementation of the Public Order and Security Integrated Concept will aim at improving the main forces responsible in this sector, the Carabinieri and the Police, with a central focus on strengthening the respect for human rights standards in exercising law enforcement duties in the context of regional security challenges to tackle hybrid threats and transnational crime.
  - Support for the establishment of a Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) database accessible for EU Member States’ law enforcement agencies will further contribute to security and stability of Moldova and strengthen capacity-building in data protection and privacy in line with human rights standards and principles. Furthermore, this action serves as a tangible expression of the external dimension of the EU Security Union (EU Security Union Strategy, July 2020).
- Support for the National Bureau of Statistics to conduct the 2024 population and housing census in line with Eurostat and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) standards, as well as further expand the collection of statistics with sex disaggregation. This will ensure data comparability of Moldovan census results with the other European countries and the correct estimation of the official population, Gross domestic product (GDP) and all other people-related national statistics. Based on the official data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics, national programmes for different sectors are developed, including reallocation from the state budget to local budgets.
- Support for increased visibility of EU assistance for the Republic of Moldova, and targeted support for independent media, strategic communications and building resilience to disinformation, including through improving media and information literacy.

## 2. RATIONALE

### 2.1. Context

The EU, its Member States and the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) signed an Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area in 2014<sup>5</sup> and fully applied it from 2016 after its ratification. An Association Agenda sets out a list of priorities for joint work on implementing the Association Agreement. The High Level Advisers Mission is one of the main instruments for their efficient and effective implementation and monitoring.

The new Association Agenda covering the period 2021-2027 guides EU-Moldova bilateral relations, and together with the five policy objectives of the March 2020 Joint Communication “The Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all”, will frame

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<sup>5</sup> Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part  
[OJ L 260](#), 30.8.2014, p. 4–738

financial assistance under the next Multiannual Financial Framework for the programming period 2021-2027.

In June 2021, the European Commission announced an **Economic Recovery Plan** for Moldova<sup>6</sup>. The Economic Recovery Plan aims to stimulate long-term socio-economic recovery, foster the green and digital transition and unleash the untapped economic potential of Moldova. It aims to leverage structural reforms, particularly on the rule of law, justice reform and anti-corruption, in order to unlock the sustainable economic recovery of the country.

**Macro-economic situation:** The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a prolonged drought in summer 2020, had a significant negative impact on the Moldovan economy. According to preliminary statistical data, in 2020 the gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by 7% compared to 2019<sup>7</sup> (y/y), while most of the recent economic forecasts project a recession between -6% and -7%. The economic downturn was driven primarily by reduction in household consumption. In the first half of 2020, private consumption fell by 9.7 % (y/y) with a comparable decrease in investment by 6.4 % (y/y). On the supply side the most significant contribution to the decline of GDP came from retail-trade (-2.1%) and industry (-1,0 %).

According to the last (June 2020) Annual Public Finance Management (PFM) and transparency assessment report, the PFM reform outlook in Moldova is generally positive. The Ministry of Finance and other key institutions remain committed to the reforms. Some notable improvements have taken place in the assessment period. This includes an improved framework for the preparation of the Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF) and a better structured MTBF document with improved content and an improved structure in the core tables presenting budgetary data of the State Budget Law. This said, the Moldovan government needs to adhere to the budget calendar. Steps need to be taken to consolidate recent gains in the area of medium-term and annual budget planning. The public procurement (PP) system needs further improvement, especially the e-procurement system. A new PP public policy document must be developed and implemented.<sup>8</sup> Further efforts on Public Internal Financial Control (PIFC) improvement are needed. The Government Decision has extended<sup>9</sup> the current PFM Strategy until the end of 2022<sup>10</sup>. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) plans to carry out a comprehensive review of the achievements and shortcomings of the Strategy based also on the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment which will end on 30/11/2022. This will serve as the basis for the development of the renewed/updated public policy document for the forthcoming period.

The current improvement of the public finance management is oriented at the budgetary planning and execution, public investment, public procurement, as well as the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of local administration through successful territorial reform and amalgamation, fostering fiscal decentralisation. There is also a need for support to strengthening gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming to ensure that major reforms are promoting equality between women and men.

The political landscape in Moldova has improved since Maia Sandu was inaugurated as the new President in December 2020. Snap Parliamentary elections in July 2021 were won by the President's party running on a pro-reform agenda, which has led to President, government and Prime Minister all being pro-reform. Improving the quality of justice remains a major objective in the context of the country's European integration agenda. Access to justice is a human right and an integral aspect of the rule of law.<sup>11</sup> In order to ensure the rule of law, Moldova needs to strengthen the independence, accountability, professionalism and efficiency of its judiciary in particular. An independent judiciary working in line with the proper democratic and professional standards is not only essential to ensure that all state institutions abide by the law and that citizens have access to justice and can exercise their rights fully, but also for international cooperation and much needed economic development.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_21\\_2712](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_2712)

<sup>7</sup> <https://statistica.gov.md/newsview.php?l=en&id=6940&idc=168>

<sup>8</sup> The last PFM and transparency report can be found at <https://mf.gov.md/sites/default/files/Raport%20SDMF%202020.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Government Decision No. 573 of 06.08.2013

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=125548&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=125548&lang=ro)

<sup>11</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/justice>

However, the lack of a Justice Strategy and Action Plan and a lack of political will have impeded effective reforms in the justice sector. Justice sector reform, strengthening the independence, impartiality, effectiveness, integrity and professional standards of key justice institutions; strengthening courts including the constitutional court; supporting judges and prosecutors, legal professions, dispute resolution mechanisms, penitentiary and legal aid system; empowering women in decision-making in legislative, executive and judicial sectors (women make up 25% of the Members of Parliament (MPs) in Moldova), support for human rights institutions and fundamental rights of individuals are key to further consolidating the democratic process and gender equality in the Republic of Moldova.

Human rights protection, gender equality promotion, prevention of gender-based violence are at the core of justice sector reform. Moldova is among the countries that have signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)<sup>12</sup>. Support is however still needed for its successful implementation. The, Moldovan Government has further approved<sup>13</sup> the National Implementation Programme of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for 2018-2021 and the Action Plan regarding the Resolution 1325 implementation<sup>14</sup>.

The European Union's partnership will remain focused on delivering tangible benefits to the Moldovan institutions and citizens as outlined in the MIP 2021-2027. The EU remains committed to working with the Republic of Moldova for supporting the reform process that is at the core of the Association Agreement, in particular as regards promoting the rule of law, fighting corruption and vested interests, irrespective of political affiliation, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and de-politicising state institutions. The EU will continue to base its relationship with the Republic of Moldova on the principle of conditionality and respect for the rule of law and democratic standards. EU assistance and support for democratic reforms have delivered tangible benefits to Moldovan citizens. However, there are many open issues connected with the implementation of the AA/DCFTA which will be supported by measures proposed in this action document.

Parliamentary oversight of the Government and its agencies is insufficient due to a lack of 'culture' of oversight and of awareness among its members and committees that oversight is not any less important than legislation. Information about the appropriate use of different monitoring tools should be disseminated. A question, interpellation or inquiry committee in itself may not solve a controversial issue, but can play an invaluable role by enhancing visibility and transparency of governmental decisions, decision making and conduct. At the same time, the functioning of the Parliament also lacks the necessary mechanisms for a fully transparent, predictable, and participative legislative process.

Reliable and comparable official statistics, produced and disseminated in full professional independence in line with European and international norms and standards, are essential for transparent, democratic societies. Effective human rights advocacy requires the use of sex-disaggregated statistics, carefully collected, and objectively analysed and presented, using the best techniques available.<sup>15</sup> The population and housing census is a cornerstone for a country's official statistics, providing a precise and detailed account of population characteristics and essential input for policy, administration, and research. The census is an extremely complex exercise. It requires mapping the entire country, mobilising and training a large number of enumerators, conducting a massive public campaign, collecting individual information, compiling vast amounts of data in paper or electronic form, and analysing and disseminating the data. EU assistance is required for Moldova to conduct a reliable census in line with European and international standards and regulations.

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<sup>12</sup> The Republic of Moldova has signed the Istanbul Convention on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> through its Decision #259 of 28 March 2018

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=102219&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=102219&lang=ro)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/954.html>

In order to step up bilateral police cooperation with EU Member States, the Together4Security: DNA database-project will serve to establish a DNA database that will be governed by an updated national DNA law in line with relevant data protection provisions and that will be accessible for EU Member States' law enforcement agencies. The action constitutes an important step for the Republic of Moldova in aligning to the EU *acquis*<sup>16)</sup> and comes in support of EU Member States' police investigations that have a link with Moldova. In parallel, the Moldovan legislator and law enforcement authorities will be actively encouraged to further align to the EU Directive 2016/680 (cf. data protection in the processing of personal data by law enforcement authorities).

In the sector of media and strategic communication, a need for enhanced efforts for improving the impact and outreach of EU public communication remains, coupled with the requirement for continuous and targeted support for the media in the country. The target audiences in the Republic of Moldova remain highly vulnerable to fragmented or subjective information about the EU (due to increased disinformation trends and the need to further develop coordinated communication from the side of EU funded projects and implementing partners) and its role in the country even if communication and visibility on EU assistance has improved significantly. The opinion polls conducted in 2020 and early 2021 indicate the high susceptibility of the population to pro-Kremlin disinformation, which indicates a clear need for greater EU support to strengthen societal resilience against disinformation risks, including through media and information literacy. Further and especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the disinformation aspect remains highly relevant for the target audiences in the Republic of Moldova.

## **2.2. Problem Analysis**

*Priority Areas and sectors: Priority area 2: Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security*

*Priority area 5: Resilient, fair, and inclusive societies*

### **Priority/Outcome 1: Advancing Moldovan reform efforts in good governance**

The coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement requires continuous structured policy dialogue to ensure proper understanding of the priorities as well as the key technical details of each of the commitments with the EU. The current 2019-2021 EU High Level Advisers' mission provides ten advisers in a wide range of sectors, whose main goal is to facilitate constant policy dialogue in order to achieve commonly agreed reforms. Given the political volatility of the Republic of Moldova, support must be continuous in order to ensure that the implementation of the AA will be followed. Furthermore, coordination of the implementation of the AA requires technical experts that can provide expertise in all sectors, as well as gender expertise to make sure that the outcomes evenly impact women and men in Moldova. This requires engagement with the relevant stakeholders at central and local levels which are instrumental for the implementation of the Association Agreement and Agendas. There are a number of challenges that arise from the policy coordination perspective and on how to promote transparency, accountability and inclusiveness of the policy making process. Indeed, the policy-making process needs to be mainstreamed in order to align all the main stakeholders within the Government of Moldova for effective policy and inclusive coordination and planning. This can be further supported by scaling up the current High Level Adviser Facility that can provide expertise to various sectors in a short period of time. In addition, in order to transform the country and reform its public administration this component could include reform support teams to help build capacity within the government administration through a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to reform implementation. Successful implementation of reforms will also depend on the capacity of the government to explain the needs and its policies to Moldovan citizens. Support to strategic communication should be integral part of implementation of EU programmes. Special attention in this regard should be paid to support the bodies regulating the information environment such as the Audiovisual Council.

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<sup>16</sup> Prüm Council Decisions 2008/615/JHA and 2008/616/JHA

The main stakeholders of a future EU High Level Adviser Mission will include mainly the central ministries of the Government and the Office of the President.

General oversight is a very important task in monitoring the approximation process as well as the work of governments in general. Among others, questions, interpellations, inquiry committees and hearings are valuable assets for members of Parliament (MPs) in exercising their rights to full and timely information from the Government. It is only through oversight, i.e. scrutinising the Government's operation and holding the executive branch accountable for its actions and decisions that a reform-oriented Parliament can ensure a proper balance of power. Through a previous 2017-2019 Twinning Project *Strengthening the capacities of the Parliament of Moldova for EU approximation process*, the need for improvement of the parliamentary oversight role over the approximation process and oversight over the work of the government and its agencies was identified. In this regard, challenges related to the legal foundation of oversight (including its Rules of Procedures), to the availability of information and cooperation with the Government and its agencies, as well as to the awareness among MPs and staff members about the importance of effective oversight were highlighted. An important part of enhancing the Parliament's capacities is also by enhancing the transparency and participatory aspect of its legislative activity, through establishing mechanisms for the engagement with civil society, relevant stakeholders and general public. EU engagement and support requires in turn a Parliament which is strongly committed to reforms, whose majority and decisions are not controlled by vested interest groups and which is demonstrably committed to implementing the Association Agreement.

The key stakeholder is a reform-minded Parliament with its Committees and the Secretariat.

Systemic problems in terms of independence, functioning of judicial institutions and compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights continue to affect the justice sector in the Republic of Moldova. Between 2017 and 2021, inclusive, there has not been a comprehensive, fully fledged Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan in place.

The main issues in the Justice Sector are a very low level of public trust in the judiciary; limited capacities of key institutions including of the Ministry of Justice and the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM); composition and selection of Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP) members (lack of integrity); absence of gender balance in key positions; corruption in the justice sector including political interference in the work of prosecutors, excessive use of closed hearing procedures in high-profile cases of public interest, and non-transparent procedures for the selection, evaluation and dismissal of judges; selective justice and the lack of independence of judges and prosecutors; and a lack of sufficient quality of judicial service provision – including a lack of quality of reasoned judgements – by Moldovan courts.

In line with Venice Commission recommendations, amendments to the Constitution regarding judicial appointments and the composition and selection procedure of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), in particular the selection of its lay members, were adopted in 2021 and will enter into force in April 2022. The effective implementation of the Justice Strategy and Action Plan adopted in December 2021 are key steps to addressing the major structural shortcomings in the justice system. The GRECO Fourth Round of Evaluation focused on Members of Parliament, judges and prosecutors, with regard to ethics and conduct, conflict of interest, assets declarations and their awareness about these topics. The second compliance report (October 2020) considered progress “globally unsatisfactory” with four out of 18 recommendations implemented sufficiently. GRECO reported a slight improvement in its interim compliance report (December 2021) with six out of eight conditions dealt with satisfactorily, while the overall compliance remained “globally unsatisfactory”. Concerning judges GRECO commended the adoption of the new constitutional framework but noted that more needs to be done to enhance transparency of judicial activity including the SCM and to strengthen objectivity of disciplinary proceedings. As regards prosecutors, it was commended that verbal instructions are now to be confirmed in writing and progress has been made to ensure that hierarchical interventions are properly documented. The legal framework for the disciplinary liability of prosecutors remains to be strengthened.

According to the EU-funded 2020 World Bank Regional Justice Survey for Moldova, one third of the general public in Moldova believe that past reforms had no effect, and an additional third of citizens

perceive the impact of justice reforms as negative. The political development in the past years as well as experience in the implementation of EU technical assistance programme fighting corruption in the justice sector have shown that political and institutional will for genuine reform is a precondition to make any reform successful. Nonetheless, the EU is committed to working with those in the Republic of Moldova who support the reform process that is at the core of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, in particular as regards fighting corruption and vested interests, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and depoliticising the state institutions. The Constitutional Court which has played a major role in recent years in upholding basic constitutional principles needs to improve its organisation and staff capacities. Moreover, the capacities at the Ministry of Justice are rather low: lacking procedural skills, managerial knowhow, and legal and legislative drafting skills.

The key stakeholders are the Ministry of Justice and its Court Administration Agency, the Superior Council of Magistracy, the Superior Council of Prosecutors, the General Prosecutor's Office, the Constitutional Court, and the National Institute of Justice.

First strategic document on Public Order and Security System was approved in 2017. Two main actors are Carabinieri and the Police and responsible for maintaining, assuring and restoring of public order and security. The Moldovan Carabinieri and the Police were established in 1991 and in 1990 after the Declaration of Independence and at the start of the Transnistrian conflict. Historically, the Carabinieri as an organisation have not benefitted from law enforcement training to prepare them for a role serving the society and its citizens. Efforts have been prepared to change the organisational culture and operational practices that would increase the level of professionalism and the service to the citizens. This will ultimately result among the general public in a better perception of and degree of cooperation with the Carabinieri. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is working on the new strategic document on Public Order and Security which is to be delivered in 2022. This document will establish a unique and coordinated system at the national level, in facing wide scale of challenges and threats, including at the Eastern border of Moldova.

The key national stakeholders for output 1.4 will be the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri and other institutions under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

While the Republic of Moldova benefits from operational cooperation agreements with EUROPOL and EUROJUST, it would be beneficial to also increase the potential for bilateral police cooperation between EU Member States on the one hand and Moldova on the other. The support in establishing a DNA database seeks to centralise and make available DNA information that can be essential in successfully conducting police investigation. The action is also closely linked to implementing the external dimension of the EU's Security Union Strategy<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, it would mirror what EU Member States' law enforcement authorities do under the Prüm Council Decisions with a view to exchanging DNA profiles in criminal investigations. The project would seek – with relevant Moldovan legislation as its basis – to establish a database of anonymised DNA profiles from convicted offenders, plus potentially anonymised DNA profiles from suspects in criminal investigations and unidentified DNA profiled found at crime scenes.

At a national level, the stakeholders are the Ministry of Internal Affairs<sup>18</sup> Ministry and the Ministry of Justice, with their respective (forensic) laboratories. The Moldovan legislator and law enforcement authorities will be actively encouraged to further align to EU Directive 2016/680 (cf. data protection in the processing of personal data by law enforcement authorities).

The 2024 Population and Housing Census is the most comprehensive statistical data collection operation on number and characteristics of a country's population and dwellings (occupied and unoccupied), living conditions, housing stock and their territorial distribution. It serves as the basis for the production of all other people-related national statistics. In recent years, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has faced major challenges related to the organisation of the census, including cost pressures, concerns about intrusiveness, privacy and response burden, reduced cooperation, difficulties in accessing and

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<sup>17</sup> COM(2020) 605 final

<sup>18</sup> According to the [law no. 235/2017](#) regarding the genetic registration (art. 7) the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the owner of the register of genetic data.

enumerating dwellings in the Transnistrian region and timeliness concerns. In addition, NBS faces additional challenges related to the limited capacities of the staff involved in the census enumeration, lack of adequate methodologies for planning, organisation and implementation of the census enumeration and evaluation of census results, lack of equipment for digitalisation of data collection and processing.

In 2020 the NBS drafted a new law on the organisation and conducting of the census in line with the EU best practices, which is foreseen to be adopted by the Parliament in 2022. In view of the importance and complexity of the census exercise and the paucity of the human, financial and technological resources of the NBS, additional support is needed on the development and modernisation of the Information and Communication Technology System, especially considering the new operational (crisis) conditions.

The key national stakeholders are the Government and the National Bureau of Statistics including its territorial subdivisions, which is the main producer of official statistics, and it manages and coordinates the activity in the field of statistics, elaborating - independently or in collaboration with the central bodies and approving methodologies for the production and dissemination of official statistics, in accordance with international standards, especially those of the European Union.

*Priority/Outcome 2: Support Moldovan reform efforts including through:*

*2.1 A strategic communication on EU support and diverse media landscape*

In the sector of strategic communication and support to media, despite strong efforts undertaken in the past years by development partners, the media outlets remain fragmented and vulnerable, gender-biased<sup>19</sup>, and lacking necessary capacities for sustainable development. From the perspective of strategic communication on EU and its assistance provided to the Republic of Moldova, continuous efforts are necessary to complement the results achieved thus far, to ensure a sustainable and impactful communication of EU support. The 2020 World Press Freedom Index of “Reporters Without Borders” ranked the Republic of Moldova 91 out of 180 countries and territories while in 2017 80 out of 180. Even though several major legislative changes have been done, in the general situation no significant evolutions occurred. The phenomenon of concentration did not disappear, and the political context continues to greatly influence the media landscape. The mandatory requirement concerning the minimum eight hours of local content per day for the national channels (four hours for regional and two hours for local) became a challenge for the broadcasters. By the end of 2018, the Moldovan parliament had managed to adopt certain draft laws pertaining to the media landscape, including the Code for Audio-visual Media Services, aimed at improving the legal framework regulating media activities and some tax exemptions. However, other important draft laws that had been developed, including a law on advertising, were not adopted. The country has also had a Journalists’ Code of Conduct since 1999 and it has been signed by more than 50 media outlets.

The key national stakeholders for the strategic communication and support for the media are the local media outlets and media, civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations, who play a key role in the development of the sector. From the perspective of the media, there are approximately 100 local and regional media outlets operating in the country, including local newspapers, radio, and TVs, as well as news portals local/regional or national, but focusing on regional issues. The great majority of them are present on the internet. Outlets use social media to generate audience feedback and participation. Local media outlets, including newspapers and TV channels are usually focused on informing about the events organised by local stakeholders in the region.

Aspects related to communication and disinformation are mentioned in the National Development Strategy “Moldova 2030”, namely in relation to communication about the benefits of green energy, as well as lack of modern up to date communication practices when discussing aspects related to environment, health education, children’s rights, etc. The document also mentions insufficient communication practices when one refers to discrimination challenges of people from socially vulnerable

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<sup>19</sup> <https://progen.md/imaginea-femeii-si-a-barbatului-in-presa-scrisa/>

groups. In terms of disinformation, the policy paper mentions practices connected to limited understanding in the sector of social care.<sup>20</sup>

Overall, aspects related to strategic communication, support to media, and countering disinformation are not historically the highlight or focus of Moldova's national policies and strategies.

Moldovan citizens are still highly susceptible to the influence of foreign disinformation narratives. The latest opinion poll surveys, conducted by 'EU Neighbours East' in spring 2021, demonstrate that 63% of respondents trust the EU (compared to 33% trusting the Eurasian Economic Union). Moreover, 71% of respondents recognise the EU and its Member States being among the main actors helping to win the fight against COVID-19 in the Republic of Moldova. Additionally, the polls show weak skills within the society to being able to distinguish between false and true information.<sup>21</sup> This illustrates a trend observed over time throughout the pandemic, including by other opinion polls conducted in 2020. It clearly calls for greater EU support to strengthen the independent media and build societal resilience against disinformation, including with tailored assistance to increase the level of media and information literacy within the society.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

#### **3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs**

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to support Moldova in the implementation of EU-related commitments, notably the Association Agreement/DCFTA.

It will also enhance Moldova's resilience to respond to urgent needs by the Moldovan central and local authorities as well as the population that are resulting or could result from the war situation following the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The Specific Objectives (Outcomes) of this action are:

1. Moldovan reform efforts in good governance have been advanced;
2. Moldovan reform efforts have been supported including through a diverse media landscape, strategic communication on EU support.

Given the unfolding and unforeseeable consequences of a the war in Ukraine initiated by Russia, the specific Objective (Outcomes) of this action are also

3. To address the immediate needs of population affected by the war in Ukraine:
  - building resilience of Moldova to deal with crisis situations such as large influx of refugees, as a result of the war in Ukraine, by developing infrastructures for sanitation, food, shelter, and to allow for orderly transit for those people wishing to leave Moldova;
  - addressing the needs of victims of the armed conflict in Ukraine who are temporarily settled in Moldova, to benefit from a minimum of socio-economic standards;
  - tackling migration and forced displacement caused by the armed conflict.
4. To strengthen resilience and build capacities to respond to war-generated impacts:
  - enhancing capacities to respond to cyber-security and information security and hybrid threats by contributing to a resilient digital environment in line with human rights standards and principles;

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<sup>20</sup> [https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/intr40\\_12\\_0.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/intr40_12_0.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> For example, 53% of respondents believe that COVID-19 crisis has been orchestrated to destroy the economy; 54% believe that the virus was intentionally developed in a laboratory; 52% think that it is not safe to be vaccinated against COVID-19; and 48% disagree with the statement that facemasks are efficient way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- strengthening economic resilience and supporting individuals, communities, institutions, and countries to quickly recover from the shocks of the armed conflict;
- enhancing societal resilience including support to fight against disinformation and by promoting an enabling environment for media, civil society and the support to internally displaced people and refugees;
- contributing to the enhancement of the country's energy resilience by restoring and strengthening its production capacity, including by enhancing energy security and diversification of energy sources;
- enhancing the resilience of institutions at national and local level, and promoting international cooperation, including support to European integration.

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

**1.1** contributing to Specific Objective 1: The level of capacity by national authorities of the EU approximation process and the implementation of the Association Agreement and Agendas has been significantly increased.

**1.2** contributing to Specific Objective 1: Strengthened oversight by the Parliament in the form of greater accountability for government decisions, as well as an open, transparent and participatory legislative process in the context of EU approximation is key to strengthen democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in the Republic of Moldova.

**1.3** contributing to Specific Objective 1: The independence integrity and accountability of the justice sector at various levels has been strengthened, reform capacity has been enhanced and the reorganisation and capacities of Moldovan courts has been facilitated.

**1.4** contributing to Specific Objective 1: The public order forces' capacity within the Ministry of Internal Affairs targeting specifically the Carabinieri for professional service delivery has been strengthened in line with EU Member States' best practices.

**1.5** contributing to Specific Objective 1: The bilateral police cooperation between EU Member States and Moldova based on the exchange of DNA profiles has been strengthened

**1.6** contributing to Specific Objective 1: The institutional capacity of the NBS for efficient and effective organisation and conducting the 2024 census has been strengthened.

**2.1** contributing to Specific Objective 2: Citizens' access to strategic communication products on EU assistance in the development of the country is increased and access to diversified media content and the capacities and sustainability of media outlets have been improved.

### **3.2. Indicative Activities**

#### **Activities related to Output 1.1:**

- capacity building,
- technical expertise,
- policy dialogue,
- performance monitoring and reporting and
- reinforcing country systems;

#### **Activities related to Output 1.2:**

- training,
- analysis and studies,
- legal and legislative review
- policy advice,
- institutional support,
- workshops, discussion round,
- visibility and awareness events,
- study tours,
- peer review exercises,
- peer evaluations;

### **Activities related to Output 1.3:**

- 
- increasing the overall level of technical assistance to the justice sector through a structural approach
- training and training for trainers,
- analysis and legislative review
- studies and designs,
- drafting support of legal and policy documents,
- study tours,
- legislative and policy support,
- support to the institutional functioning of justice stakeholders,
- awareness raising activities,
- workshops, discussion rounds,
- visibility and awareness events,
- support to the integrity check of candidates / members of the SCM, SCP and National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and support to the extraordinary evaluation of judges and prosecutors,
- support to the secondment of a Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust
- establishment of a research database;

### **Activities related to Output 1.4:**

- training,
- digitalisation of specific processes,
- study tours,
- analysis and studies,
- provision of expert advice,
- drafting support of legal and policy documents,
- workshops, discussion round,
- visibility and awareness events,
- revision of organisational charts;

### **Activities related to Output 1.5:**

- establishment of a DNA database
- specific equipment,
- provision of expert advice,
- analysis,
- workshops, discussion round,
- visibility and awareness events,
- study tours,
- training;

### **Activities related to Output 1.6:**

- capacity building of the staff involved in the census enumeration,

- methodological support for the planning, organisation and implementation of the census enumeration and evaluation of results,
- support in improving the ICT infrastructure of the NBS,
- organisation of a thorough communication campaign to ensure a complete coverage of the population and provision of reliable data from respondents,
- provide support to improve the dissemination of census results at different territorial levels,
- improve access to microdata and data confidentiality issues;

### **Activities related to Output 2.1:**

Activities for strategic communication and media support:

- targeted and impactful communication campaigns on EU assistance and support, events and communication activities organised at Europe Café premises and EU Info Centres and Euroclubs, involvement of Young European Ambassadors in relevant communication and visibility activities,
- development of communication activities/event/products,
- joint activities with EU Member States from the perspective of communication/visibility,
- support activities to media outlets and journalists (trainings, mentoring, study visits, etc.) as well as EU funded projects from the perspective of strategic communication on EU support and assistance;
- provide strategic communication support to Moldovan government and institutions

### **3.3. Mainstreaming**

#### **Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

**Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

**Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The CRA screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

#### **Gender Equality and empowerment of women and girls**

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1. This implies that gender and diversity issues will be mainstreamed into the design of reforms undertaken under this programme. The inclusion of women in decision-making processes will be one of the principles in the capacity building aspect.

However, since it is designed as a demand-driven action, inclusion of gender equality related issues will be defined at a later stage, before contracting. Efforts will be made to ensure greater participation of women in politics. Support in the area of statistics will aim to contribute towards making sex-disaggregated data available in Moldova. Target groups for support will have a distinct gender dimension: media users, energy consumers, court users, IT users.

Proposed action will address gender issues (though rather indirectly as regards the main barriers to poverty reduction for women and girls) in the Republic of Moldova: it furthers women's access to justice and their specific needs in the area of governance, especially in areas where women are largely under-represented. It will address gender imbalances and promote gender equality within the service of the Moldovan Carabinieri, and generally advocate for mainstreaming gender in the transposition of law in specific policy areas (justice, law enforcement, media and gender policy) by the Moldovan Parliament. The implementation of this action will be guided by the principles and objectives of the EU Gender Action

Plan III<sup>22</sup>. The outputs and outcomes of the Action will be disaggregated along gender lines. Proposed actions will also support the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and further Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security in respective areas.

### Human Rights

All efforts to advance public administration reform in Moldova will apply the human rights based approach and be based on the principles of good governance, equality, equity, and the inclusion of socially or economically deprived groups.

The proposed action is consistent with the Human Rights Country Strategy for the Republic of Moldova and addresses concerns raised by International Treaty Bodies as well as deficiencies identified by the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe.

### Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is not a significant objective of this action.

### Democracy

The capacity building aspect of this programme will focus on supporting and strengthening the commitment of the Moldovan Government to the principles of public administration developed by the European Commission in close cooperation with the OECD/SIGMA.

### Conflict sensitivity, peace, and resilience

Conflict sensitivity of the action will be ensured by allocating part of the budget to activities allowing of the Transnistria region to benefit from the support of this action applying the EU confidence building measures approach.

### Disaster Risk Reduction

Not targeted.

## 3.4. Risks and Lessons Learnt

Category <sup>23</sup>	Risks	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
1	Geopolitical tensions and less favourable economic performance hamper political stability and the government's actions.	H	H	Reorientation of assistance. Intensified policy dialogue with the Government and local stakeholders following (and within) the frameworks of the AA and DCFTA.
1 and 2		H	H	Intensified policy dialogue with the Government and local stakeholders

<sup>22</sup> The EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III is a Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative JOIN(2020) 17 final

<sup>23</sup> The risk (category) can be related 1-to the external environment; 2-to planning, processes and systems; 3-to people and the organisation; 4-to legality and regularity aspects; 5-to communication and information

	A political crisis has an impact on the government's ability and commitment to implement provisions of the AA, and to adopt needed development strategies and programmes for specific sectors			following (and within) the frameworks of the AA. Mobilising the facility under the High Level Adviser's Mission to provide targeted support to pivotal areas.
1	Natural disasters and pandemics	H	H	Discussions with the relevant stakeholders about the possibilities to switch to tele-working and use simple and accessible online platforms such as for swift communication, collaboration and face-to-face exchanges.
1	Weakening of government's commitment to reforms related to the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.	M	M	Continued political and policy dialogue with the authorities, information campaigns targeting the institutions and the general public and coordination with the international community. Mobilising the facility under the High Level Adviser's Mission to provide targeted support to pivotal areas.
3	Lack of expertise and loss of institutional memory due to high staff turnover (training personnel leaving the beneficiaries) and low level of salaries within the civil service.	H	H	Capacity building and training sessions for management staff within institutions responsible for Human Resources development, managerial accountability and general capacity building. Mobilising the facility under the High Level Adviser's Mission to provide targeted support to pivotal areas.  The implementation of the action will seek to involve significant numbers of staff in project activities, with a system of focal points in place. Additionally, project deliverables will be transferred to the beneficiaries in writing as end products for later use.
3	Lack of institutional absorption capacity to ensure longer-term sustainability.	H	H	Intensified and structured coordination between implementing bodies and local stakeholders in defining and agreeing upon operational management structures for long-term sustainability. Mobilising the facility under the High Level Adviser's Mission to provide targeted support to pivotal areas.
3	Ministries of Justice and	M	M	Intensified policy dialogue with the Ministries of Justice and Internal

	Internal Affairs find no agreement on where and how to embed the central DNA database.			Affairs, possible in cooperation with TAIEX support to demonstrate best practices that exist in EU Member States.
2	The timing of the Government's reform agenda is unrealistic and will in parts get delayed.	H	H	Intensified policy dialogue about the timing of planned reforms in each sector.
5	Increased disinformation in the communication context of the country and vulnerability of media outlets.	M	M	The action will address these specific risks with targeted efforts on increasing awareness levels of the population on healthy media consumption habits and support to media outlets to decrease their level of dependence and vulnerability on internal political and economic context.
1	Parliament and Government are less engaged in a reform-oriented agenda	H	H	Close monitoring of the political developments
1	The work of the Government and Parliament is disrupted by political disputes	H	H	Increased constructive dialogue with political parties, especially those represented in the Moldovan Parliament.

### Lessons Learnt

Findings and conclusions from closed and ongoing actions by the EU or other partners on basis of which the envisaged action has been designed. The overall framework of EU financial assistance should be taken into account. Findings and recommendations from relevant evaluations should also be considered.

- Having continuous access to EU high-level advice ensuring business continuity in monitoring and reporting on key reforms and strategies required as part of the implementation of the Association Agreement and Agendas is critical in keeping track of the reform agenda in a politically instable landscape.
- It is recommended to identify outcomes that take into account the high politicisation of the environment.
- Parliamentary oversight should be used in a more effective manner in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova not only in the European approximation process but also in other matters. To achieve this, the regulatory and technical basis should be improved and the “culture” of oversight developed.
- The action under *A law enforcement agency fit for modern times* builds further on work that has been done with Moldova's General Police Inspectorate under the EU Support Programme to Police Reform (ENI/2015/038-144). By working with the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri and the other relevant entities within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, EU assistance will professionalise an even wider part of the law enforcement community in its service delivery to

citizens.

- The flagship Stratcom project implemented on a bilateral level in the Republic of Moldova is showcasing the need for increased efforts from the perspective of communication and visibility of EU support and assistance provided to media and journalists in the country.
- Gender mainstreaming helps improve results of the programming by better reflecting the needs of target groups, existing imbalances and barriers, and making sure that women, men and vulnerable groups equally benefit from and contribute to the programmes.
- By approving the Government Decision on the National Implementation Programme of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for 2018-2021 (2018) and signing the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), Moldova has undertaken important commitments for promoting gender equality and reducing gender gaps in given areas. It constitutes one of the major objectives in the context of the country's European integration agenda. Greater legal equality between men and women is associated with a narrower gender gap in opportunities and outcomes, fewer female workers in positions of vulnerable employment, and greater political representation for women.

The planning of alternative (back-up) activities in the context of COVID-19 restrictions is necessary.

### **3.5. The Intervention Logic**

This action aims to support the Republic of Moldova in the implementation of EU related commitments, notably the Association Agreement/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), through reform efforts in the areas of justice, law enforcement, anti-corruption, parliamentary oversight and a population and housing census.

The underlying intervention logic is that this action contributes towards this Impact as a result of the achievement of the following two Outcomes:

**Outcome 1: Moldovan reform efforts in good governance have been advanced.** It will be realised through a technical cooperation facility which will achieve the following six outputs:

- Output 1.1: The level of capacity of national authorities regarding the EU approximation process and the implementation of the Association Agreement and Agendas has been significantly increased. Capacity of national authorities to communicate the reforms to Moldovan citizens has been significantly improved.
- Output 1.2 Strengthened oversight by the Parliament in the form of greater accountability for government decisions, as well as an open, transparent and participatory legislative process in the context of EU approximation is key to strengthen democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in the Republic of Moldova (Output 1.2). It shall further help developing, consolidating and increasing the stability and effectiveness of democratic institutions and the rule of law, as stipulated by the Association Agreement and the Association Agenda. The underlying assumption is that a strengthened Parliament oversight will facilitate the institutional and functional development of public authorities, in order to assist an efficient, transparent decision-making and a participatory strategic reform process.
- Output 1.3: The independence, integrity and accountability of the justice sector at various levels has been strengthened, reform capacity has been enhanced and the reorganisation and capacities of Moldovan courts has been facilitated. (Output 1.3). It will therefore facilitate the commitments

of the Republic of Moldova made in the Association Agreement and the 2021-2027 Association Agenda.

To this end, this action will provide support through overall increased and structural technical assistance to implement reforms in the justice sector and to strengthening the independence of the judiciary, including assistance in constitutional and legislative reforms, implementation of the Justice Strategy (once in force) and support to address key issues related to the functioning and the integrity of the Superior Council of Magistracy, the Superior Council of Prosecutors (in particular through the pre-vetting of candidates for judicial and prosecutorial self-governance bodies), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), as well as the integrity and capacities of individual judges and prosecutors; conduct a comprehensive analysis of the political economy of all relevant justice institutions and stakeholders; enhance the capacities of staff of the Ministry of Justice; supports the strengthening of the capacity of the National Institute of Justice; assists the realisation of the Judicial Map including through support to the Court Administration Agency and design of new court premises; increase the capacities and digitalization of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova; and assist reform efforts in line with the new Justice Reform Strategy.

The underlying assumption for sustainable results includes political will and commitment towards genuine reform of the justice sector.

- Output 1.4: The public order forces' capacity within the Ministry of Internal Affairs targeting specifically the Carabinieri for professional service delivery has been strengthened in line with EU Member States' best practices.. (Output 1.4). This groundwork will facilitate the realization of Moldova's commitments enshrined in the Association Agreement/DCFTA. The development of a new Public Order and Security Development Programme for 2022-2025, based on the previous 2017-2020 Strategy, is fully in line with the 2021-2027 Association Agenda. To this end, sufficient institutional and absorption capacity to ensure longer-term sustainability will be crucial; it is assumed that trained personnel would remain in place and expertise and institutional memory would be retained in the institution.

Output 1.5: The bilateral police cooperation between EU Member States and Moldova based on the exchange of DNA profiles has been strengthened (Output 1.5). It is assumed that the establishment of an operational, centralised DNA database in Moldova will facilitate operational and strategic cooperation with Europol and operational cooperation between police and other law enforcement units of EU Member States. The number of cross-border crime investigations is expected to increase which will be supported by a faster and more effective exchange of information on DNA profiles. Outputs will include a national DNA database available to EU Member States' law enforcement organisations.

- Output 1.6: The institutional capacity of the NBS for efficient and effective organisation and conducting the 2024 census has been strengthened  
The Population and Housing Census is the most comprehensive statistical data collection operation on number and characteristics of a country's population and dwellings (occupied and unoccupied), living conditions, housing stock and their territorial distribution; it serves as the basis for the production of all other people-related national statistics. Census data are used for better planning and implementation of a variety of programmes, including education and training, health and social services. It provides detailed statistics that are important for industries and communities and all line ministries in elaborating their policies for different sectors. Trade associations, chambers of commerce, and businesses rely on this information for economic development, business decisions, and strategic planning. Therefore, the intervention will contribute directly to the implementation of Moldovan reform on good governance. Additional support will be provided on the development and modernisation of the Information and Communication Technology System, especially considering the new operational (crisis) conditions, capacity building of the staff

involved in the census enumeration, methodological support for the planning, organisation and implementation of the census enumeration and evaluation of census results, equipment for digitalisation of data collection and processing.

Assumptions: The National Bureau of Statistics elaborated the draft law on census organisation and submitted it to the Government, and subsequently to the Parliament for approval. NBS is committed to implement the new law on census organisation.

**Outcome 2: Moldovan reform efforts have been supported including through a diverse media landscape, strategic communication on EU support.** It will be realised through the achievement of the following output:

- Output 2.1: Citizens' access to strategic communication products on EU assistance's role in the development of the country is increased and access to diversified media content and the capacities and sustainability of media outlets have been improved.

From the perspective of support to strategic communication and media, the outputs to be accomplished will contribute to advancing efforts related to reforms in good governance by giving the citizens of the country access to information and media resources which are accurate, impactful, objective and present the overall importance of the role of reforms and progress in the country, based on the context provided by EU support and assistance to various sectors. An underlying assumption from the logframe of this action is connected to the percentage of population that has access to such communication and information products currently and how this indicator can improve with the implementation of the action.

Regarding its horizontal logic, established indicators will serve to monitor / measure progress towards results (outputs) of the action. Factors that cannot be controlled but may influence the action in a positive or a negative way are mentioned under the identified risks reflected on in Section 3.4.

### 3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

PROJECT MODALITY (3 levels of results / indicators / Source of Data / Assumptions - no activities)

Results	Results chain ((): Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators ((): (at least one indicator per expected result)	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	To support Moldova in the implementation of EU related commitments, notably the Association Agreement/DCFTA	<i>1 Rule of Law score in relation to countries benefiting from EU assistance (NDICI 1)</i>				<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	1. Moldovan reform efforts in good governance have been advanced	<i>1.1 Number of reform policies renewed or in place in good governance, law enforcement and security 1.2 Number of gender-sensitive reform policies in good governance, justice, law enforcement, and security sectors 1.3 Number of public policies developed and/or revised with internal and external consultations with national and local stakeholders with EU support</i>	Tbd	Tbd		No political crisis occurs or has no impact on the government's ability and commitment to implement provisions of the AA/, and to adopt needed development strategies and programmes for specific sectors.
<b>Outcome 2</b>	2. Moldovan reform efforts have been supported	<i>2.1 % of population who has increased awareness levels</i>	tbd	Tbd	2.1 Surveys	The political context in the Republic of

	including through a diverse media landscape, strategic communication on EU support	<p><i>of EU support and assistance, sex-disaggregated</i></p> <p><i>2.2 % of media outlets that increased their financial and technical capacities</i></p> <p><i>2.3 % of media outlets that produce products free from gender stereotypes</i></p> <p><i>2.4 Media outlets covering strategically the reform efforts supported by the EU</i></p>			<p>2.2 In-house assessments</p> <p>2.3 Reports of stakeholders, as relevant NGOs in the sector and associations</p>	Moldova will have no impact on the communication efforts undertaken and on the cooperation and support for media outlets.
<b>Output 1.1</b>	1.1 The capacities of national authorities relating to the EU approximation process and the implementation of the Association Agreement and Agenda have significantly increased.	<p><i>1.1.1 % of reform goals of EUHLAs achieved</i></p> <p><i>1.1.2 % of EU regulation approximated and effectively implemented coming from AA requirements</i></p>	tbd 2020	<p>1.1.1 50-80% increase</p> <p>1.1.2 Tbd</p>	<p>1.1.1 National Mechanism for Reporting and Planning</p> <p>1.1.2 Available data from the MFAEI, State Chancellery and Ministry of Finance</p>	<p>The Government remains committed and able to allocate sufficient resources to implementation of the AA reforms and strategies.</p> <p>The beneficiary institutions properly staffed and with necessary absorption capacity to receive and benefit from the proposed actions.</p>
<b>Output 1.2</b>	1.2 Strengthened oversight by the Parliament in the form of greater accountability for government decisions, as well as an open, transparent and participatory legislative process in the context of EU	<i>1.2.1 Number of initiatives launched by the Parliament in exercising its oversight functions</i>	tbd	tbd	<p>1.2.1 Government Reports</p> <p>1.2.2 Reports by independent local and international</p>	The political situation allows for the realization of objective oversight committees and oversight interventions are free

	<p>approximation is key to strengthen democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in the Republic of Moldova</p>	<p><i>1.2.2 Number of legal acts of governmental institutions/agencies under scrutiny by the parliament</i></p> <p><i>1.2.3 Number of requests for clarification and information from governmental agencies in exercising its oversight functions</i></p>			<p>Civil Society Organisations</p> <p>1.2.3 Statistics and Reports by International Organisations</p>	<p>from political influence.</p> <p>The work of the Government and Parliament is disrupted by political disputes</p>
<p><b>Output 1.3</b></p>	<p>1.3 The independence, integrity and accountability of the justice sector at various levels has been strengthened, reform capacity has been enhanced and the reorganisation and capacities of Moldovan courts has been facilitated.</p>	<p><i>1.3.1 Reduced Nr. of cases decided against the Republic of Moldova by the ECtHR, including those related to violence against women</i></p> <p><i>1.3.2 Number of a) judges, b) prosecutors and c) lawyers and d) court staff trained with EU support on European standards and EU acquis</i></p> <p><i>1.3.3 Legislation aimed at strengthening the independence of the judiciary adopted</i></p> <p><i>1.3.4 Number of relevant GRECO recommendations addressed by the Government/Ministry of Justice</i></p> <p><i>1.3.5 Nr. of MoJ staff trained on management and</i></p>	<p>tbd</p>	<p>tbd</p>	<p>1.3.1 Government Reports</p> <p>1.3.2 Reports by independent local and international Civil Society Organisations</p> <p>1.3.3 Statistics and Reports by International Organisations</p>	<p>There is political will and commitment towards genuine reform of the justice sector</p>

		<p><i>coordination skills, sex-disaggregated</i></p> <p><i>1.3.6 Comprehensive political economy analysis of the Justice Sector conducted</i></p> <p><i>1.3.8 “ Integrity standards applied as set out, in particular, in the relevant opinions of the Venice Commission. Number of judicial actors evaluated including for these integrity standards</i></p> <p><i>1.3.9 Number of court premises designed and level improvement of court case research database</i></p> <p><i>1.3.10 Level of Justice Strategy implemented</i></p>				
<b>Output 1.4</b>	<p>1.4 The public order forces’ capacity for professional service delivery in line with EU Member States’ best practices has been strengthened</p>	<p><i>1.4.1 Revised National Strategy for Public Order and Security and recommendation for the institutional road-map for the implementation of the new strategic document as well as the organisation chart implemented in line with the Carabinieri’s legal</i></p>	<p>1.4.1 <i>evaluation of the educational system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from Moldova</i></p> <p>1.4.2 Organizational chart as well as any other relevant MIA</p>	<p>tbd</p> <p>tbd</p> <p>tbd</p>	<p>1.4.1 Training handbook/catalogue</p> <p>1.4.2 Government Decisions</p> <p>1.4.3 Updated Functional Analysis</p>	<p>There is sufficient institutional and absorption capacity to ensure longer-term sustainability.</p> <p>Trained Carabinieri personnel and other relevant public order personnel remains in place and expertise and institutional memory is</p>

		<p><i>mandate and role in role in society</i></p> <p><i>1.4.2 Number of trainings conducted to increase the professional conduct of staff of the Moldovan Carabinieri and other relevant security forces engaged in public order.</i></p> <p><i>1.4.3 Number of Carabinieri and other relevant security forces engaged in public order staff trained including on gender responsive policing/conduct, sex-disaggregated</i></p> <p><i>1.4.4 Increased capabilities to assume public order duties and responsibilities, in compliance with established standards and practices related to human rights, gender equality in policing</i></p>	<p>document for that purpose.</p> <p>1.4.3 Functional Analysis of the General Inspectorate of Carabinieri, the police as well as the Ministry of Internal Affairs in coordinating and managing public order.</p>			<p>retained in the institution</p> <p>-</p>
			tbd			
<b>Output 1.5</b>	1.5 The bilateral police cooperation between EU Member States and Moldova based on the exchange of DNA profiles has been strengthened	<i>1.5.1 A national DNA database is established and managed in full compliance with a national DNA law's provisions.</i>	1.5.1 No operational centralized DNA database (2021)	tbd	1.5.1 Government's establishment report 1.5.2 Statistical reporting from the	A Government Decision on appoints responsible authority for the data base (e.g. Ministry of Justice versus Ministry of Internal Affairs)

		<i>1.5.2 Selected DNA profiles are made available to EU Member States' competent law enforcement organisations on a hit/no-hit basis.</i>	1.5.2 Selected DNA profiles not systematically available (2021)	tbd	Government and qualitative feedback from EU MS.	Government aligns operations and procedures to the EU Prüm Council Decisions (2008)  Moldova can be connected to the TESTA-network
<b>Output 1.6</b>	1.6 Strengthened institutional capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics for efficient and effective organisation and conducting the 2024 census	<p><i>1.6.1 Number of the NBS staff trained on different aspects related to conducting a census, including in gender equality related topics, sex-disaggregated;</i></p> <p><i>1.6.2 Number of new technologies (ICT infrastructure (hardware and software) applied for census enumeration with the EU support;</i></p> <p><i>1.6.3 Number of new statistical data collection methods implemented at enumeration stage of the census, including in gender equality related topics</i></p>	<p>1.6.1 30% (2022)</p> <p>1.6.2 (0)2022</p> <p>1.6.3 2 (2022)</p>	<p>1.6.1 70 % (2023)</p> <p>1.6.2 20(2023)</p> <p>1.6.3 5 (2023)</p>	<p>1.6.1 NBS Annual Reports,</p> <p>1.6.2 Project reports</p>	<p>The National Bureau of Statistics elaborated the draft law on census organisation and submitted it to the Government, and subsequently to the Parliament for approval. NBS is committed to implement the new law on census organisation.</p>

<p><b>Output 2.1</b></p>	<p>Citizens' access to strategic communication products on EU assistance in the development of the country is increased and access to diversified media content and the capacities and sustainability of media outlets have been improved</p>	<p><i>2.1.1 % of citizens having a good awareness level of EU and the assistance provided to the Republic of Moldova</i></p> <p><i>2.1.2 % of citizens having a basic understanding of the role of bilateral EU MS support towards the development of the country</i></p> <p><i>2.1.3 % of citizens having a good understanding of EU values and cooperation aspects with the Republic of Moldova</i></p> <p><i>2.1.4 % of citizens having access to diverse products of media outlets</i></p>	<p>2.1.1 2020-2021 (for all indicators)</p>	<p>2.1.1 2024-2025 (for all indicators)</p>	<p>2.1.1 National surveys performed by EU Neighbours East Project and/or suveys/reports undertaken by the communication and visibility projects</p>	<p>The political situation and developments in the country that could have no impact on the effectiveness and outcomes of the activities undertaken</p>
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## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

### **4.2. Indicative Implementation Period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of entry into force of the financing agreement.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Financing Decision and the relevant contracts and agreements.

### **4.3. Implementation Modalities**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>24</sup>.

#### **4.3.1. Direct Management (Grants)**

##### **4.3.1.1 Twinning Grant – Parliament**

###### **(a) Purpose of the grant**

Under **Output 1.2**, the Parliament shall be supported to become more effective in its role as an oversight body. This action shall be implemented through a Twinning Grant.

###### **(b) Type of applicants targeted**

The Twinning Grant under Output 1.2 in support of the Moldovan Parliament shall be implemented by an EU Member State administration and/or mandated body.

#### **4.3.2. Direct Management (Procurement)**

Procurements will contribute to Outputs 1.1 and 2.1.

#### **4.3.3. Indirect Management with pillar assessed entities<sup>25</sup>**

##### **4.3.3.1 – Indirect Management with an entrusted entity**

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity(ies), which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- proven knowledge and expertise in justice sector,
- as well as a track record and the capacity to develop good working relations with local partners and
- demonstrated capacity to deliver work.

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<sup>24</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu) Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

<sup>25</sup> The signature of a contribution agreement with the chosen entity/ies is subject to the completion of the necessary pillar assessments

The implementation by this(ese) entity(ies) entails strengthening the independence and accountability of the justice sector at various levels, enhancing reform capacity and facilitating the reorganisation and capacities of Moldovan courts (**Output 1.3**).

#### **4.3.3.2 – Indirect management with an entrusted entity**

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity(ies), which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- proven knowledge and expertise in police sector,
- as well as a track record and the capacity to develop good working relations with local partners and
- demonstrated capacity to deliver work.

The implementation by this(ese) entity(ies) entails strengthening the Carabinieri's and police force's capacity within the Ministry of Internal Affairs for professional service delivery in line with EU Member States' best practices (**Output 1.4**).

**4.3.3.3 – Indirect management with an entrusted entity** A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity(ies), which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- proven knowledge and expertise in the area DNA Database sector,
- as well as a track record and the capacity to develop good working relations with local partners and
- demonstrated capacity to deliver work.

The implementation by this(ese) entity(ies) entails creating a DNA Database to enable the exchange of DNA profiles with EU Member States (**Output 1.5**).

#### 4.3.3.4 – Indirect management with an entrusted entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity(ies), which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria:

- proven knowledge and expertise in the statistics office,
- as well as a track record and the capacity to develop good working relations with local partners and
- demonstrated capacity to deliver work.

The implementation by this(ese) entity(ies) entails strengthening the capacities of the National Bureau of Statistics for efficient and effective organisation and conducting the 2024 census (**Output 1.6**).

#### 4.3.3.5 – Indirect management with an entrusted entity

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity(ies), which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria:

- proven knowledge and expertise in the area of public administration reform,
- as well as a track record and the capacity to develop good working relations with local partners and
- demonstrated capacity to deliver work.

The implementation by this(ese) entity(ies) entails transform the country and reforming its public administration (**Output 1.1**).

#### 4.3.4 Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances (one alternative second option)

The preferred implementation modality under section 4.3.3.1, 4.3.3.3 and 4.3.3.4 and 4.3.3.5 is indirect management with entrusted entities. In case that no agreement can be reached, direct management (**procurement**) will be used as per section 4.3.2 to implement these actions.

The preferred implementation modality under section 4.3.3.2 is indirect management with an entrusted entity. In case that no agreement can be reached, direct management (**twinning grant**) will be used as per section 4.3.1 to implement this action.

#### 4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply subject to the following provisions.

The Commission’s authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

#### 4.5. Indicative Budget

Indicative Budget components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)
<b>Output 1.1 – HLA mission and reform support</b> , composed of	
Indirect management - section 4.3.3.5	3 000 000
Procurement (direct management) – section 4.3.2	N/A
<b>Output 1.2 – Parliament oversight</b> , composed of	

Grants (direct management) – section 4.3.1.1	N/A
<b>Output 1.3 – Justice Support</b> , composed of	
Indirect management - section 4.3.3.1	6 500 000
<b>Output 1.4 – Carabinieri support</b> , composed of	
Indirect management - section 4.3.3.2	2 000 000
<b>Output 1.5 – DNA database exchange</b> , composed of	
Indirect management – section 4.3.3.3	1 000 000
<b>Output 1.6 – Population and housing census</b> , composed of	
Indirect management – section 4.3.3.4	2 000 000
<b>Output 2.1 – Media and strategic communication</b> , composed of	.
Procurement (direct management) – section 4.3.2	N/A
<b>Total grants</b> – section 4.3.2	1 400 000
<b>Total procurement</b> – section 4.3.3	11 000 000
<b>Evaluation</b> – section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – section 5.3	<b>100 000</b>
<b>Communication and visibility</b> – section 6	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27 000 000</b>

#### 4.7. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, represented by the relevant programme officers from the Delegation’s Cooperation section, will be responsible for supervising the implementation of the projects.

The implementing entities will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the projects and mobilisation of all needed resources. The implementing entities will assist the Project beneficiaries in establishing the Project Steering Committees to guide the project implementation. The Project Steering Committees will oversee and validate the overall direction and policy of the project (or other responsibilities to be specified). The implementing entity will report regularly to the Project Steering Committee, which will review the project progress and give guidance on key issues. The Project Steering Committees shall meet on a regular basis, indicatively once or twice a year. Ad-hoc meetings can be convened in case of need. The Project Steering Committee shall be made up of representatives of key stakeholders.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the EU Delegation may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action

## 5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

### 5.1. Monitoring and Reporting

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner’s responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall

establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

- Baselines setting: Baselines, targets and sources of data have been partially defined in the logframe. These will be reconfirmed or amended if necessary at the time of the contracting. If needed, additional studies will be commissioned.
- Data collection and reporting: Data collection and reporting will be under the responsibility of the implementing partners.
- Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Capacities: M&E capacities of the partner country are strengthened through a dedicated intervention. While this action doesn't foresee specific support on M&E, it will certainly require active involvement of the country M&E system.
- Active and meaningful participation of stakeholders: This action has been designed based on consultations with a large group of stakeholders, including the Government, the business sector and the civil society. It is in line with many of the priorities identified as a result of the consultation and with Government strategies and programmes. It is expected that a large number of stakeholders will benefit from it and will be actively supporting it. Due care will be taken to raise awareness about the action and its benefits to ensure active stakeholders' participation.

## **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the nature of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the fact that that follow up actions may be launched under some of the priorities.

The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

Evaluation services may be contracted under a framework contract.

## **5.3. Audit and Verifications**

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

## 6. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility is a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to advertise the European Union's support for their work to the relevant audiences.

To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the [Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018](#) (as updated by the communication and visibility requirements in force under the current programming period 2021 - 2027), notably with regard to the use of the EU emblem and the elaboration of a dedicated communication and visibility plan, to be completed for every action at the start of implementation.

These obligations apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country (for instance, concerning the reforms supported through budget support), contractors, grant beneficiaries or entrusted entities. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

Communication and visibility measures may be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.