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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

“Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova” project

PROGRESS REPORT



7 February 2018

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Photo cover page: Children are welcomed by the women’s platform on their visit to the Parliament of Moldova, as part of the official programme of the Open Parliament Week, 11 – 15 September 2017.

Summary

Reporting Period	January – December 2017
Donor	Government of Sweden
Country	Republic of Moldova
Project Title	Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova
Project ID	00094901
Output ID	00088088
Implementing Partner	Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Project Start Date	July, 2016
Project End Date	December, 2019
Annual Budget 2017	USD \$ 972,647
Total Project Budget	USD \$ 4,300.000
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Executive Summary

In 2017 the project managed to significantly increase the efficiency of the Parliament in carrying out its main functions and responsibilities. With the project's support, the work commenced on the monitoring and reporting practices related to the parliament's activity in the European integration process. The Parliament decided to pilot the new monitoring and reporting mechanism on EU-related matters for 12 months. During the reporting period, the project made efforts to strengthen the awareness of MPs and staff on the SDGs and enhance the role of the Parliament in the implementation of the Global Agenda 2030.

The reporting period is also marked by important achievements leading to an enhanced capacity of parliament to exercise its legislative and oversight functions. Activities organised by the project, such as public hearings and consultations, helped MPs to take informed decisions and bring the approved legislation closer to the EU standards. The project continued its activities aiming to instil amongst MPs and parliamentary staffers the importance of conducting Gender Responsive Analyses.

During the reporting period, considerable progress was made in creating a clear, alternative voice on anti-corruption within the legislature. The project provided continues support to the Moldova Chapter of the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) to create and foster parliamentary champions on these highly political issues.

The project also assisted in making the parliament's legislative activity more open, transparent and participatory through establishing tools and mechanisms for the engagement with the civil society. First steps towards development of an Open Parliament Action Plan were initiated. A significant progress was made in strengthening the Parliament's outreach function. By implementing a Communication Strategy, the parliament improved its cooperation with civil society and citizens. Important internal regulations and policies were approved, the document flow optimized, the communication capacities and skills of staffers increased.

In 2017 work started on the reform of the secretariat of parliament. The project further consolidated the capacities of Parliament in the areas of information management and research. A new e-archive software solution was implemented that will considerably improve the daily work of staffers.

The project also initiated activities designed to enhance the capacities of Gagauz People's Assembly. To assess currently performed functions and to provide a basis for the identification of required structural changes, the project undertook a thorough functional and institutional analysis of the GPA.

Introduction

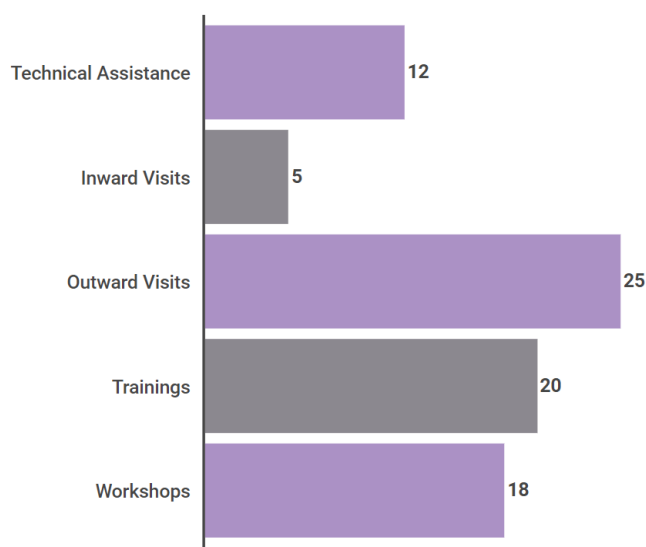
The Project “Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova” works with the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova to strengthen its law-making, oversight and representation functions with a specific focus on EU integration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project directly assists standing committees and the secretariat of parliament in the implementation of their mandate.

Project interventions include training, technical assistance, easy-to-read publications, exchanges and opportunities for learning from other parliaments, as well as the provision of specialized technical equipment. Through this support, parliament has an improved capacity to strengthen the legal framework and successfully engage in oversight through multi-stakeholder action involving civil society, professional associations and the general public. Activities will offer and encourage equal opportunity for male and female participation and gender is mainstreamed throughout the project.

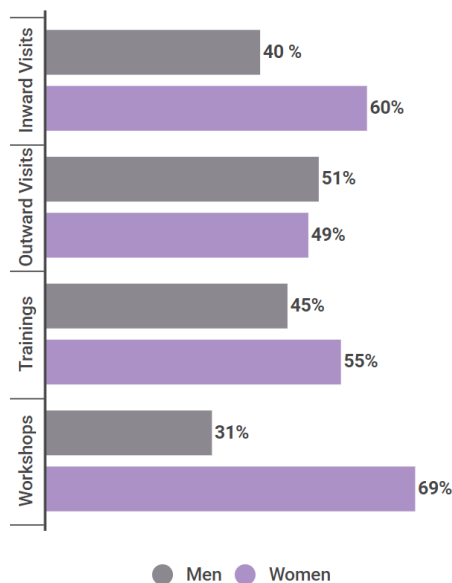
The Project has the following objectives:

- Enhance the capacity of the Parliament to timely review draft laws and their compliance with international treaties and EU legislation;
- Strengthen the cooperation between the parliament and government to ensure a transparent, participatory and gender-sensitive law-making process;
- Enhance capacities of standing committees to effectively oversee implementation of laws and policies;
- Support the secretariat to align its organizational structure, internal procedures and work practice with the needs of the legislature;
- Strengthen the role of thematic cross-party groups (Women Platform, GOPAC Chapter and others) to oversee implementation of the gender and anti-corruption legislation;
- Enhance the capacity of the Secretariat of the Gagauz People’s Assembly (GPA) to assist committees in the review of legislation;
- Strengthen the capacity of the secretariat to operationalize a parliamentary information management system (e-Parliament), enhancing the institutional access and transparency to meet information demands of the civil society, media and citizens.

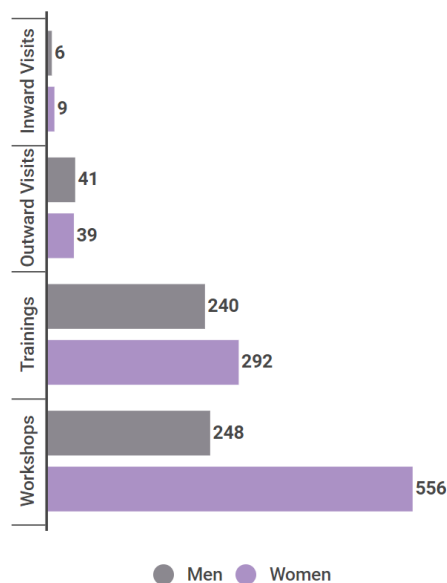
This annual report covers activities from 1 January - 31 December 2017. During the reporting period, the capacity of parliament on the above issues has been strengthened through 20 trainings and 18 workshops, as well as 25 study visits (inward and outward) in Europe. The UNDP delivered technical assistance with the support of 12 national and international consultants with a focus on knowledge and capacity transfer to the MPs and staff of the parliament. In total, the project managed to engage 1,431 direct beneficiaries into its activities, of which an average of 63% were female.



Graph 1. Number of activities per category



Graph 2. Percentage of male and female participants



Graph 3. Number of participants per activity type

Context analysis

Over the last 12 months, the optimism surrounding the 2016 Presidential elections has tempered. In a [poll](#) conducted by the Centre for Insights in Survey Research, 78% of respondents said that they believe the country is heading in the wrong direction.¹ The most cited problems include low income/pensions (42%), unemployment (36%) and corruption (28%). Strikingly, almost a third of respondents believe that corruption is most present in the parliament (30%), while only 7% believes that political parties and party leadership are the largest source of corruption.²

The Democratic Party caucus has continued to lead a majority in the parliament with the support of 21 unaffiliated MPs, in addition to their 19 elected deputies. However, the [socio-political poll](#) conducted by the Public Opinion Fund in November shows that next year's elections might see a dramatic change in the political landscape with only two parties (socialist party and the action & solidarity party) currently polled to make the 6% electoral threshold.³ As a result, pre-campaign activities have kick-offed and most MPs have become noticeably more active on social media. Unsurprisingly, the project's most successful activities include oversight and support to the communications department, as they create visibility for parliament and MPs. UNDP also received a renewed request for finalization of the parliament's web portal with additional support to introduce an e-parliament system.

The project was impacted by the approval of a new electoral system in July. The electoral system had been changed from the proportional representation to a mixed parallel one in which 50 Members of Parliament will be elected in Single Member Districts, and 51 through a closed party lists system. Thus, the 40% gender quota adopted in 2016⁴ will be applied only for the proportional component, which potentially will have adverse effects on the representation of women in Parliament. As result of

¹ This is a 16% increase from March 2017, source: Centre for Insights in Survey Research,

http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/2017-11-8_moldova_poll_presentation.pdf , pg. 4.

² http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/2017-11-8_moldova_poll_presentation.pdf, pg. 19.

³ <http://www.moldova.org/en/poll-48-moldovans-vote-join-eurasian-economic-union-40-european-union/>

⁴ <http://cec.md/files/files/Legi/Codul%20electoral.pdf>

pressure from CSOs⁵, the United Nations (UNRC/UNDP RR letter to the Speaker of the Parliament), and society at large, a series of incentives have been agreed which take the form of additional public funding to parties that respect the quota of at least 40% of women candidates in uninominal constituencies.

Furthermore, the cooperation between members of the coordinating council of the women's platform were put under pressure by the decision to reshuffle the leadership of several standing committees before the summer break. However, despite these setbacks, UNDP managed to persevere by constructively engaging stakeholders on gender issues. The work on SDGs also suffered a setback, when Mrs. Domenti resigned from parliament in December. She had previously been identified as a champion on development issues and the project invested time and effort for her to decisively lead on the SDG portfolio.

In recent months, there have also been several anti-corruption scandals involving politicians from opposition parties including the arrests of the Mayors of Chişinău and Orhei. For some members of the GOPAC group, these arrests are an important motivation to speak out against corruption in public and work on the adoption of the code of conduct and monitoring the implementation of the anti-corruption strategy.

Progress review

The outcome of the project is measured by the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) of which a draft was developed at the end of 2017 (see annex 2). The sections below describe the most significant results per outcome area, as well as UNDP's strategy and approach to bring about change.

Output 1. Improved capacity to review and adopt legislation

EU integration

In 2014, the Parliament of Moldova ratified the EU-Moldova Association Agreement (AA), together with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA), through which Moldova committed itself to the regulatory approximation of European legal standards. This process significantly increased the amount of draft legislation and policy documents to be reviewed by the parliament, as well as oversee the effective implementation of the AA and DCFTA.

Given the importance of the European agenda and large public awareness, the Parliament of Moldova was obliged to develop an institutional structure for coordination of the legal approximation process between committees. Secondly, the legislature needed to improve its internal monitoring and reporting practices, in order to inform the European Parliament and Moldovan citizens of its contribution to the EU integration process.

In April 2016 with the support from UNDP, the Parliament adopted a set of [principles and rules of procedure](#)⁶ for the functioning of the Parliamentary Council for European Integration (PCEI) and established a Corpus of parliamentary advisors (committee staff members) on European integration that received in-depth training to support the PCEI in its activities. Since July 2016, the project worked further to establish functional mechanisms for internal communication and coordination between the council and committees, as well as improve cooperation between the parliament and government.

⁵ <http://egalitadedegen.md/en/pozitia-platformei-pentru-egalitate-de-gen-fata-de-proiectul-de-lege-nr-60-din-14-03-17-care-presupune-schimbarea-sistemului-electoral/>

⁶ <http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/2476/Page/23/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>



Training for parliamentary staff on M&E and the EU Integration process

During the reporting period, work commenced on the monitoring and reporting practices regarding EU integration. Despite the third change in the committee chairmanship since the start of the Project's activities in the field of EU integration, the planned work is on track. A quarterly reporting system including the elaboration of quantitative indicators on the parliament's activity in the European integration process was set up with the project's technical assistance. Additionally, knowledge of the relevant committee advisors on external reporting practices and on the

assessment of readily available information and data for reports on EU integration was expanded through extensive four training courses organized by the project.

On 11 October 2017, the PCEI decided to pilot the monitoring and reporting mechanism on EU-related matters for 12 months. This endorsement is another positive step in the process of institutionalizing the information and coordination system.

As a result of the trainings and coaching, the staffers now have a better understanding of the entire process of legislation approximation, including the preparation of tables of concordances and compliance checking with EU legislation. They can also easily identify relevant information for their work using the UNDP note on EU databases and related information sources (i.e. EUR-Lex, N-Lex and IPEX). The final evaluation of the trainings on M&E and EU databases revealed that these activities were informative and that participants plan on using the knowledge for their role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the AA and DCFTA.

"The structural institutional changes that were made with the support of the project are very valuable and highly appreciated", said Mrs. Victoria Maxim, parliamentary advisor to the PCEI.

Mrs. Maxim worked with the project for the past 2,5 years, during which she benefited from several trainings and exposure visits.

The RRF indicators show a declining % of bills of EU relevance that were adopted within 60 working days. Also, the average time required for committees to review bills is still above the set targets. There are two main reasons for this: the complexity of the bills under consideration during 2017 and the decline in the quality of bills, following the implementation of cost saving measures as part of the public administrative reform. This has substantially increase the work of the legal department of parliament.

Gender equality

In 2017, the parliament moved forward on the findings of the 2015 Gender Audit Report and importantly approved the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) in July.⁷ Moving forward, UNDP's strategy for the advancement of the gender work is two-fold. First, the largest emphasis will be placed

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<http://parlament.md/SesiuniParlamentare/%C5%9Edintebirouluipermanent/tabid/129/SittingId/2784/lanuage/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

on advancing gender work within the secretariat by focusing on gender-analysis of legislation. Secondly, we are identifying a short-term legislative/oversight project that can be implemented by the women's caucus, before the election campaign kicks off.

For the forthcoming period, UNDP will focus on implementation of action areas 2 and 3 of the GEAP, creating within the parliament the necessary capacities for analyses of legislation from a gender perspective and facilitating gender equality mainstreaming in all policies, programs, practices and decisions.

Under GEAP objective 3, UNDP is now supporting committee staff with the gender analysis of several bills that are being scrutinized by parliament during the fall and spring sessions. Despite training of some secretariat staff members back in 2016, there has been little institutional use of their new skills. Both the parliament and government lack rules for a mandatory gender analysis of legislation. Even though the state chancellery recommends gender-impact analysis⁸, as part of an ex-ante impact assessment and the legal department in the PRM secretariat has an internal checklist for the review of draft bills, these serve as recommendations and lack a methodology for conducting a thorough analysis.

In a response, we decided to mentor and support staff with the gender analysis of several bills on boosting employment and unemployment insurance, as well as agricultural subsidies. The idea is to develop the missing methodology and create practical examples of how a careful analysis can help draft well-informed amendments to the benefit of women and the Moldovan society at large. The coaching of parliamentary staffers is done to build commitment within the institution for gender analysis of bills and transform this into a habitual activity.

The Chairpersons of the Committee for Social Protection, Health and Family (CSPHF), as well as the Committee for Human Rights and Inter-Ethnic Relations (CHRIR) both showed immediate interest and agreed for one of their committee advisors to be involved in this activity. This intervention will involve on the job learning and coaching by Mr. Buzu, thus deploying a pilot project which will result in parliamentary staffers acquiring and improving their skills to review the legislation from a gender perspective. This project is to be extended to the first half of 2018.

Strategic Reform Secretariat

In 2017 work started on the reform of the secretariat after the appointment of a change manager. First, a review was done of the progress on the recommendations made by the functional analysis to identify outstanding issues that need to be addressed in the process of institutional reform.

Subsequently, a road map was drafted which grouped the outstanding recommendations in three categories: better structure and improved internal processes of the secretariat, effective analytical and professional support to MPs and cost-efficient auxiliary services. The aim of the road map was to empower the management of parliament in leading the reform process and help steer and prioritize reform proposals to be developed with support of UNDP.

The change manager's work on the detailed reform proposals was undermined by the lack of substantial feedback from the leadership on the overarching road map. UNDP closely coordinated with the human resources department (appointed lead) on the process, but we were informed on two proposals for organizational reform only after their submission to the Speaker in December. In the same month, the Speaker of Parliament publicly announced a 40% reduction of secretariat staff, which

⁸ Please see <http://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/advanced-page-type/analiza-ex-ante-si-evaluarea-ex-post-politicilor-publice-ghiduri-metodologice> and http://rapc.gov.md/file/Ghid_ex%20ante_Vol%201_final.pdf for more information on the this recommendation.

substantially increased anxiety within the secretariat. At the end of the reporting period, it was unclear how the parliament wants to take the reform process forward and what UNDP's role would be, if any.

On the other hand, much progress was made on less political reform issues. As part of the improvement of the internal procedures, UNDP supported the drafting of a regulation on the elaboration, approval and execution of the parliament's internal budget. The aim of the regulation is to link available resources with strategic development priorities of the institution. With HACT support, the Secretariat of Parliament also introduced a mandatory performance evaluation for all staff including the setting of personal performance goals. Additionally, the secretariat management were familiarized to non-pecuniary motivation measures and a stress and job satisfaction assessment was done among staff to identify and address issues for better staff motivation and retention. Overall, 25% of the Strategic Development Plan has been implemented since its adoption in March 2017.

Gagauz People's Assembly



Staff members of the Gagauz People's Assembly familiarizing themselves with the IT infrastructure of the Parliament of Moldova

At the explicit request of the Parliament of Moldova, the project initiated activities aimed at enhancing the capacities of the Gagauz People's Assembly (GPA) targeting both the secretariat and committees. Work also commenced on bringing together the secretariats of both legislatures for information exchange and cooperation. The project is uniquely placed to do so and these activities are complementary to the political work of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) with the joint working group.

To assess currently performed functions and to provide a basis for the identification of required structural changes, the Project undertook a thorough functional and institutional analysis of the GPA. As a result, the final Functional Analysis Report outlines the functions, working processes, responsibilities and activities of the GPA as a whole and the various departments and units in particular. It provides a list of findings and recommendations that will guide the improvement of the administrative mechanisms of the GPA. The Report was well received by GPA senior management and the political leadership.

Moreover, the findings and recommendations will be used for the development of the first Strategic Development Plan of GPA 2018-2020. The work on SDP has already started. To ensure a participatory and inclusive process, the Project is planning to organise a workshop earlier next year to engage the senior management of GPA and key personnel in the SDP development process.

During 2017, GPA staff benefited from trainings on communication, stress and time management provided by the project. UNDP also facilitated the organization of short internships at the Parliament of Moldova for six GPA staff members from the legal department and committee secretariats. The main purpose was to make a start with peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge related to legislative process, parliamentary documentation, public outreach and the organisation of plenary sessions. In their back-to-office reports the interns indicated their satisfaction with the program and readiness to improve the internal practices related to legislative process within the GPA. The project will evaluate the internships early next year and develop a concept for a regular internship program. This would involve not only visits to Chisinau, but also travel in the opposite direction.

Output 2. Improved capacity to oversee implementation of laws and policies

Oversight

Over the last years, the Parliament of Moldova has undertaken steps towards improvement of its oversight function by organizing public hearings and consultations on a more regular basis. Importantly, oversight was made a key priority by the parliament's leadership this year and all parliamentary standing committees organised several public hearings and fact-finding field visits during the fall session.

Nevertheless, the current practices on oversight are still considered insufficient by both MPs and staff. Despite having an array of oversight tools, the legislature does not fully use them for different reasons. To address existing challenges, UNDP started a technical assistance activity on government scrutiny in cooperation with all parliamentary committees and the legal department. The Parliament of Moldova requested UNDP to support with the development of a more coherent approach to oversight. As said by Mr Creangă, Head of the Legal Department "we want to look at the different models [for oversight as applied in the region] and alone we will not manage to implement improvements".

"Parliamentary oversight is a priority for the Moldovan Parliament in 2017. We are grateful to our development partners for supporting us in learning from the best practices in the region and the world," said Anatolie Zagorodnii, deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Legal Issues, Appointments and Immunities.



Official presentation of the assessment report on parliamentary oversight in Moldova, 29 November 2017

As a first step towards enhanced oversight, a solid baseline study was conducted by two experts engaged jointly by the parliament (HACT modality) and the UNDP project. Additionally, the team drafted amendments for the rules of procedure and a methodology for ex-post analysis of legislation. To ensure the relevance of the provided technical assistance, a focus group composed of more than 20 committee advisers and staffers from legal department met three times over the course of the activity. They shared their knowledge and experience on oversight for the baseline assessment and confirmed

the correctness of findings, as well as validated recommendations. The focus group also considered taking up some of the best practices identified in the recently-published Global Parliamentary Report on oversight.⁹ Recommendations and methodology were presented to the parliament during a workshop organised on 29 November 2017.¹⁰

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In July, work was finalized on the nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a total of 107 targets for sustainable development in Moldova were adopted. The State Chancellery,

⁹ The second Global Parliamentary Report was jointly produced by UNDP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). It focuses on parliament's role in oversight of government, and parliament's power to hold government to account for its actions and decisions.

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/parliamentary_development/global-parliamentary-report-2017.html

¹⁰<http://www.parliament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3575/Page/1/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

with the support of the United Nations, conducted consultations with over 200 persons and analysed more than 60 comments, as a basis for the [final report](#). Subsequently, a mid-term evaluation report was commissioned by UNDP of the National Development Strategy *Moldova 2020*. Among other findings, the [evaluation](#) points out that parliament has played a minimal role in overseeing the implementation of the national development strategy (NDS). The legislature has of course a special role in the implementation process of the NDS, by ensuring the link between the *Moldova 2020* priorities and the budget process. However, interviews with relevant actors and the survey evaluation found that MPs showed a reduced interest for the NDS since its adoption in July 2012 and the function of parliamentary control has not been exercised as required.

Project output 2 focusses on enhancing parliament's oversight role in monitoring the progress in implementing the localized SDGs targets. The SPGM project has employed two strategies for the legislature to engage more meaningful with the SDGs. First of all, we invested in awareness-raising on the SDGs (which are relatively unknown among MPs) to gather interest and identify champions among parliamentarians. In this respect, the project has made large efforts to involve MP's in international and national events on the SDG that took place in 2017 including participation in two events on gender equality, women empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals in Ukraine. At these high-level events Moldovan members of Parliament had the opportunity to learn from experiences of others, but also to present Moldova's actions towards the implementation of 2030 Agenda. At the national level, the project has maintained a permanent communication with the State Chancellery, which is leading on the SDG nationalization process, in order to facilitate parliamentary participation in key national events.

Second, in September work kick-offed on the elaboration of the new *Moldova 2030* strategy. By linking the parliamentary work to the new development planning process, we aim to concretize parliament's role on the SDGs. To this effect, the project team organized a briefing to parliamentarians and Secretariat staff by representatives of the State Chancellery and Expert-Grup on the elaboration of the *Moldova 2030* strategy and the process of nationalization of SDG targets into the national strategic planning process. MPs heard first-hand that work is already underway and that they need to mobilize soon, in order to contribute to the development and implementation of the strategy.

In November, the visit of the UNDP Regional Deputy Director also created some movement on the political level, as the Speaker informed UNDP of his intention to make an official statement on the *Moldova 2030* process and the SDGs. In a follow-up, the project worked hard to secure a parliamentary champion to lead on the SDGs on behalf of parliament. Unfortunately, Mrs. Domenti resigned from the parliament shortly after acceptance of her leadership on the SDGs. Discussions are ongoing with the new Deputy Speaker for inclusion of the SDGs in his mandate and build on the awareness raising work done in 2017.

Women's platform

We also continued to engage the women's platform, as part of GEAP objective 4. On 3 October, the women's platform hosted parliamentarians and civil society representatives from 12 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia during the Regional Conference "Parliamentarians for gender equality and women's empowerment" organized by UN Women, UNDP and OSCE in partnership with the PRM. After the conference, the Secretary-General acknowledged the need for a gender focal point in the



Mr. Iurie Leancă, Deputy Speaker speaking at the launch of the 16 days campaign

secretariat to support implementation of the GEAP and provide secretarial services to the women's platform. This is a small, but noteworthy sign that our activities are slowly changing perceptions on the need for parliament to take gender issues more serious.

Capitalising on the substantial support offered by UNDP during 2016 in the context of the "16 days of activism against gender-based violence" campaign, the women's caucus and PRM secretariat developed a concept for a public hearing on domestic violence for joint implementation with UNDP.

On 13 December, the social protection committee and the women's platform discussed the progress in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence specifically implementation of the provisions of Law 196 of 28 July 2016.¹¹ Importantly, civil society was also present at the public hearing to discuss their perspective on this pervasive issue.

Anti-corruption

During the reporting period, considerable progress was made in creating a clear, alternative voice on anti-corruption within the legislature.

It still remains difficult to advance on the objectives set in the first pillar of the [National integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy of Moldova](#) (Anti-corruption Strategy)¹², which is specifically dedicated to parliament. The actions set in the strategy aim to increase legislative transparency and integrity of MPs and closely follow recommendations of the [GRECO evaluation report](#) for the Republic of Moldova.¹³ In order to progress, UNDP employed two strategies for advancement on anti-corruption issues. First of all, we continued supporting the [Moldova Chapter of the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption \(GOPAC\)](#), in order to create and foster parliamentary champions on these highly political issues. Secondly, we facilitated parliamentary access for both GRECO and ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights - OSCE) to ensure broader international advocacy on compliance with international anti-corruption norms.

A notable impact was ensured by unifying the development partners' messages to the Parliament of Moldova on the need to adopt and implement the legislative framework regulating parliamentary ethics and conduct. During the [meeting with GRECO rapporteurs](#) on 28 September 2017,¹⁴ members of the legal affairs committee and GOPAC Chapter, discussed the GRECO recommendations for Republic of Moldova and parliament's progress in the fight against corruption. UNDP will further work with OSCE - ODIHR to create the necessary platform for experience sharing related to a regulatory framework for parliamentary ethics and conduct.

¹¹<http://lex.justice.md/md/366648/>

¹²<http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=370789>

¹³<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806c9b1a>

¹⁴ <http://parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3367/Page/14/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>



Mr. Roman Boțan, Chairman of the Committee on National Security, Defence and Public Order reading the GOPAC statement on 16 October 2017.

support to the stated objectives. Overall, this is a small, but encouraging step in the right direction. The event was also broadly covered in the news.

Furthermore, the GOPAC Moldova Chapter also started a series of regional roundtable discussions to identify the problems and solutions at the local level related to the fight against corruption. The meetings with representatives of Local Public Authorities (LPA), citizens and civil society in the north¹⁶ and south¹⁷ of Moldova were very successful in terms of attendance. These events were also important opportunities for parliamentarians to take a public stance on anti-corruption issues and a step towards consolidating an alternative parliamentary voice on these political issues. The project also facilitated two peer-to-peer exchanges in the context of regional events connected to the fight against corruption.¹⁸

As a result of the increased visibility of the GOPAC Chapter, membership was doubled from 9 active members in 2016 to 18 members at the end of 2017.¹⁹

To confirm the commitment to fighting corruption, the GOPAC Chapter members developed a [joint statement](#), which was presented in the plenary session on 12 October by the Co-Chairperson of the Chapter.¹⁵ A specific request was made to their fellow MPs to adopt the Code of Conduct and Ethics (in line with GRECO recommendations), which has been stalled in the legal affairs committee. Ahead of the read-out, the statement was distributed and the GOPAC Secretariat collected a total of 53 out of 101 signatures from MPs, thus expressing their

¹⁵ <http://parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3406/Page/11/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

¹⁶ <http://parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3199/Page/31/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

¹⁷ <http://parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3437/Page/8/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

¹⁸ <http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3494/Page/2/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

<http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3504/Page/1/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/GOPACMoldova/posts/1522313087816847>

Output 3. Improved capacity to engage with CSOs, media and citizens

Information management system

The key findings of the 2016 [functional analysis](#)²⁰ show that the parliament's work processes are inherently manual and paper-based. The staff is still working with a mixture of hard and soft-copies of legislation, amendments and other documents. Parliament is also not routinely sharing information about committee deliberations and findings with the public and media, nor is it uniformly seeking inputs from CSOs and citizens in its legislative work. Information on the legislative process is also hard to locate on the existing website. This all leads to inefficient work processes and weakens transparency and accountability of the parliament.

In order to address this situation, the permanent bureau approved a concept note for a documentation management system (the core element of an e-parliament system) in November 2015 aiming to introduce modern information technology for increased efficiency and transparency. Subsequently, an assessment of the ICT department's capacity to implement an e-parliament information system was conducted in 2016. The existing transparency, accessibility and accountability practices within the Parliament of Moldova were also reviewed.



Certificates attesting successful completion of training on Information Security Management System, obtained by parliamentary staff

During the reporting period, an ICT transformation plan as well as the technical specifications (tender documentation) for an e-parliament system were developed and approved by the IT working group (parliamentary staff and UNDP) in March 2017. The project also provided support to the development of technical specifications for e-voting software system. The approval of the document by the leadership of parliament was a major milestone, as it took six weeks and three rounds of feedback from the parliamentary IT working group to develop them.

Moreover, UNDP organized specialised training courses for parliamentary IT staff members on how to configure, manage and do basic troubleshooting for a MikroTik router, a networking device that supports the parliament's internet. They also learned to efficiently establish, implement and maintain an information security management system within the Parliament. All the selected staffers, enrolled in the two training courses, successfully passed the final exams and received certifications.

In parallel, work continued on the development of a new website. Earlier this year, the website was tested several times to assess its performance and address any technical issues. The last test on the parliament's server on 6 June showed that the loading time of the website was too long, despite extensive work by the IT company to fix outstanding problems. Further testing was necessary to determine the cause of the issue: either the quality of the product and/or the capacity of the parliament's servers. Unfortunately, work was halted in summer, as the IT company was not granted prolonged access to its server.

²⁰ Functional and Institutional Analysis: Findings and recommendations, April 2016, pg. 39

In November, discussions restarted when the parliament's leadership reconfirmed the development and implementation of an e-parliament system (web portal, e-voting and document management system) as a key priority for 2018. In December, the legislature signed a cost-sharing agreement with UNDP for a contribution of USD \$105,000. Additionally, it was agreed that the planned donor coordination meeting would include a pitch for the necessary additional funding for the e-parliament activity. A new working group was formed that includes equal representation from users (all secretariat staff) and the staff members of the IT department.

In addition, few separate e-modules were developed to improve efficiency internally and in the interaction with citizens. These modules can be integrated into the e-parliament system at a later stage.

An [e-petition system](#) was successfully implemented and from April 2017 citizens have been submitting petitions online through the following website: e-petitii.parlament.md. The website allows citizens to track the progress in the examination of their petition in real time.

"Citizens can file a petition online, via mail, email, and in person, at our petition's office, and the system allows us to examine all these petitions swiftly and effectively," says Maria Chetroi, Head of the Petitions and Audience Department of Parliament's Secretariat.

Furthermore, the project supported the parliament with the implementation of an e-archive as recommended by the functional analysis. On 9 April 2009, the protests against the parliamentary election results caused damages to the parliamentary building and resulted in the loss of almost the entire parliamentary archive. Moreover, all registers of recorded documents of the parliament were maintained manually in the absence of a digital system and an e-archive would make considerable improvements for the daily work of staffers from an efficiency perspective.

With UNDP support, around 660.000 acts were digitised and uploaded into DSpace over the course of several months.²¹ This new electronic information system will significantly improve the documentation workflow, allowing MPs and staff instant access to different files from the e-archive.

Parliamentary openness and transparency

The Parliamentary Openness movement was launched under the umbrella of the [Open Government Partnership](#) (OGP), an international voluntary initiative aimed at improving government performance, encouraging civic participation and increasing government accountability to citizens. Mirroring progress at government level, a [Declaration on Parliamentary Openness](#) was officially launched at the World e-Parliament Conference in September 2012. Subsequently, an OGP legislative openness working group was created and various parliaments around the world developed parliamentary action plans, as a complement to the National Action Plans co-created between government and civil society.

The Republic of Moldova adhered to the Open Government Partnership in 2011 and has already implemented two National Action Plans as part of this platform. However, Moldova is regionally lagging on parliamentary openness, as both the Parliament of Georgia and Ukraine are already implementing their second action plans.

Over the course of 2017, UNDP has encouraged OGP engagement, as an important opportunity to bring civil society and parliament together for trust-building and a more meaningful cooperation. This

²¹ DSpace – an open source software offering the opportunity to build open digital repositories.

is necessitated by the change in the electoral law and proposed amendments to the CSO bill, which damaged CSO-parliament relations significantly. Secondly, a parliamentary action plan would of course also be an important contribution to accountability, as increased openness would allow civil society and citizens to better track the work of the legislature.

In 2017, the Speaker declared parliament's intention to engage with OGP and an exchange of letters took place including the promise to appoint a focal point within parliament. UNDP also facilitated the participation of three MPs in the Global Legislative Openness Conference organized by the OGP legislative openness working group in Ukraine in May. On 12 September, UNDP supported parliament to host a first meeting with civil society during the open parliament days, which was the launch event of the process of elaboration of the parliamentary openness action plan. The meeting was very well-attended and subsequently several NGOs submitted their proposals for the content of a first action plan. At the end November, parliament finally moved to finalize the civil society strategy, which was extensively consulted with CSOs under the leadership of former Deputy Speaker, Mrs. Liliana Palihovici. The permanent bureau also appointed Mrs. Buliga, Chairperson of the Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family to lead on implementation of the strategy.

Citizens outreach

Throughout 2017, the parliament has made substantial progress towards enhancing its outreach role and institutionalising communications procedures. After reorganisation in the fall of 2016, the General Department on Communication and Public Relations further defined its work processes in line with the new scope of work and institutionalised these by means of standard operating procedures with support from UNDP. Based on the 2016 communications audit, a communication strategy and action plan was created for the period 2016 – 2019 and subsequently approved by the permanent bureau in July 2017.²² Since its adoption, an impressive 46% has been implemented of the communication action plan.

During the reporting period, the communications department doubled their efforts towards public outreach activities aimed at growing public understanding of the role and functioning of the Parliament of Moldova. In total, the department organized 231 public visits (6,298 participants) in 2017, which is an increase from 151 visits (3,491 participants) in 2016. The parliament's Facebook account also significantly increased its followers from 16,000 to 24,000 over the course of 12 months. Live streamed plenary sessions lead on average to 1,000 visits of the website during broadcasts.

²²<http://parlament.md/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=pxNYncFWIRQ%3D&tabid=212&language=ro-RO>;
<http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3296/Page/29/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>



Children visit the Parliament of Moldova, as part of the official programme of the Open Parliament Week, 11 – 15 September 2017.

With support of UNDP and parliament (HACT modality), six video infographics and two brochures were produced and shared during visits to the parliament including the open parliament days, as well as posted on social media channels. The videos have been viewed 44,000 times on Facebook and 698 aggregated views were registered on the legislatures YouTube channel. Additionally, the videos have also been broadcast on four national TV channels. In 2018,

the communications department will further disseminate these educational materials in schools and the Parliamentary Territorial Information Offices (TIOPs).

Following strategy priorities, UNDP also supported the development of a new corporate logo and visual identity guidelines, in line with the best parliamentary practices. The former logo and guidelines dated back to 2011, which gave limited information on the use of the institutional logo (branding guidelines), whilst throughout the institution there was no uniform visual identity. The new logo, typography and colour pallets were launched in July 2017²³ and work on the branding of visibility items and uniformization of selected internal and external communications tools will be finalized by the end of December.

Because of the improved and increased external communication, the legislature's work has become much more visible. As an outcome, the communications department has received several requests from governmental bodies to share its communications and social media strategy. Moreover, the articles on the parliament's web portal have also become more diverse and are no longer predominantly covering the activities of the Speaker. The aim is to slowly, but steadily ensure that parliament is seen as an institution and not just a grouping of individual politicians. There is still a lot of work ahead, but the public perception of parliament has made a turn for the better in 2017. "We went from negative to zero [in terms of public imagine]", according to the Head of the Communications Department. In 2018, UNDP support will focus on further implementation of the communication strategy and action plan with a focus on civic education in the run up to the upcoming elections.

²³<http://www.parlament.md/Actualitate/Comunicatedepresa/tabid/90/ContentId/3297/Page/29/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>