

S t u d i a i A n a l i z y
S t u d i e s & A n a l y s e s

*Centrum Analiz
Społeczno – Ekonomicznych*



*Center for Social
and Economic Research*

255

Jacek Cukrowski, Radzislawa Gortat, Piotr Kazmierkiewicz

**Moldova: Assessment of Civil Society
and Democratic Institutions**

Warsaw, November 2003

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily reflect the views of Freedom House or USAID.

The paper was prepared within the advisory project entitled “Moldova: Assessment of Civil Society and Democratic Institutions,” sponsored by Freedom House and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The publication was financed by ComArch.

Key words: **Moldova, Transnistria, civil society, democratic institutions.**

© CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research, Warsaw 2003

Graphic Design: Agnieszka Natalia Bury

ISSN 1506-1701, ISBN: 83-7178-310-8

Publisher:

CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research
12 Sienkiewicza, 00-944 Warsaw, Poland
tel.: (48 22) 622 66 27, 828 61 33, fax: (48 22) 828 60 69
e-mail: CASE@case.com.pl
<http://www.case.com.pl/>

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Abstract | 5 |
| Preface | 6 |
| 1. Moldova - Country Description | 7 |
| 1.1. Geographical and Historical Context | 7 |
| 1.2. Political Background..... | 9 |
| 1.3. Social Issues..... | 10 |
| 1.4. Economic Performance..... | 12 |
| 2. Development of Civil Society and Democratic Institutions in Moldova | 13 |
| 2.1. Institutional Development..... | 13 |
| 2.2. Civil Society Organizations..... | 15 |
| Political parties..... | 15 |
| Non-governmental organizations | 17 |
| 3. Features of Civil Society and Democratic Institutions in Moldova | 22 |
| 3.1. Participation of youth in civic life..... | 22 |
| 3.2. Public awareness campaigns and human rights..... | 25 |
| 3.3. Freedom of media | 27 |
| 3.4. Think tanks..... | 31 |
| 4. Summary and Conclusions | 33 |
| References | 36 |
| Annex | 37 |
| List of interviews | 41 |

Jacek Cukrowski

Jacek Cukrowski received his M.Sc. degree in Systems Engineering in 1985, Ph.D in Computer Science in 1990, Postgraduate Diploma in Sociology and Politics in 1993, Ph.D. in Economics in 1995. In 1997 he defended Habilitation Thesis in Economics. In 1992 – 1999 he worked as a researcher in the Economics Institute in the Academy of Science of the Czech Republic. Since 1998 he has been a docent of Charles University (Czech Republic), and Professor of University of Finance and Management (Poland), since 1997 with CASE Foundation.

Radzislawa Gortat

Radzislawa Gortat has Ph.D. degree in political science. She is the Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Political Science of the Warsaw University, the Lecturer at the Higher School of Humanities in Pultusk, Poland, and the Senior Research Fellow at the CASE Foundation. She participated in a number of CASE research and technical assistance projects in countries of the former USSR. She is the author of several publications related to political and constitutional reforms, elections and democratization process in former communist countries.

Piotr Kazmierkiewicz

*Piotr Kazmierkiewicz holds a Master degree from Central European University in Budapest (1997) and a Bachelor degree from Southern Oregon University (1996) in Political Science. His interests include comparative European migration policy and the East European foreign policy. He served as an international policy fellow at the Open Society Institute (2001) and a consultant at McKinsey and Company (2000, 2002). He is the author of the report, *Turning Threats into Opportunities: Impact of the Expansion of Schengen Acquis on the New Borderlands* (Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw, 2003), and a co-author of the study, *Managing Migration: the Experience of Poland in Light of European Directives* (Migration Policy Forum, Warsaw; Migration Policy Group, Brussels, 2003).*

Abstract

Non governmental organizations have been active in Moldova since 1989, but a civil society started its today's formation as a result of radical reforms in economic and political areas only after the country became independent in 1991. Since that time the establishment of a transitional civil society in Moldova is under way. However, starting from 2001, when the Communist Party won the general elections, development of the nongovernmental sector has become slower. Although several positive patterns evident at the end of the nineties indicate progress in the development of Moldovan non-governmental sector, there is a number of sensitive issues (e.g., freedom of media, human rights protection) in relation to which certain regress has been observed especially in the last two years. Media market in Moldova is far from being free, and protection of human rights remains to be a problem (in all respects, situation of non-governmental sector in Transnistria is much worse than in Moldova). Finally, it needs to be emphasized that critical socio-economic situation seems to be the main threat to democracy and the rule of law in the country. This is because further significant economic decline can provide fertile ground for non-democratic political forces and extremists. Economic collapse could be a real threat to the achievements in the area of democratization and civil society development. Thus, only results of a successful economic reform process may reverse undesirable patterns and change socio-economic situation in Moldova, increase income of population, decrease poverty, guarantee stability and irreversibility of Moldovan achievements in democratization and development of civil society.

Preface

Civil society in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has attracted increasing international attention over the past several years. While hopeful signs are emerging that indicate progress, other developments concerning the media and freedom of expression, rule of law and corruption, and government accountability point to persistent challenges in the transition. Considering such developments, Freedom House (FH) with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has embarked on an intensive exercise to review the aforementioned trends in selected countries (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) through detailed assessments of civil society and democratic institutions. The specific areas of interest include: (i) participation of youth in civic life (participation of youth movements in public affairs); (ii) public awareness campaigns and human rights (current and recent civil society efforts to conduct public awareness campaigns related to human and civil rights issues including free and fair elections, access to information, government transparency); (iii) freedom of media (factors affecting access to information and freedom of expression); (iv) think tanks and the reform agenda (role and impact of think tanks and policy institutes in shaping the current reform agenda, including constitutional reform, political reform, judicial reform, and foreign affairs and security sector reform).

This report is one of the country papers prepared in the framework of FH project. Findings are based on available statistical data, a number of in-depth interviews, reports of international organizations, relevant secondary analyses that are available in the country, research papers in the academic literature, and other documents. Issues presented in the report were discussed with the members of civil society institutes in Moldova. Their willingness to cooperate and feedback is gratefully acknowledged. All persons who have kindly accepted to have an interview with the members of the team are also acknowledged.

The content of the paper is the sole responsibility of the authors and in no way represents the views of Freedom House.

1. Moldova - Country Description

1.1. Geographical and Historical Context

The Republic of Moldova is a relatively new country located in the area of former Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) – the second smallest republic of the former Soviet Union (SU). The country is landlocked between Ukraine in the north, east and south and Romania in the west. Its area (including Transnistria) is about 33 850 sq km¹ and population amounts to 3.6 million (4.4 million including Transnistria)².

Present-day Moldova formed the eastern part of Moldavia (Moldova in Romanian), a principality which was under Ottoman Empire since 16th century. In 1812, the Russian Empire annexed Bessarabia (Basarabia in Romanian), which includes today's Republic of Moldova and parts of present-day Ukraine. In early 1918, Moldova declared independence but was incorporated into Romania a few months later. This move was sanctioned by the 1920 Treaty of Paris but never recognized by the Soviet Union, which in 1924 established the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on the eastern bank of the Dniester (Nistru in Romanian) river, as part of the Ukrainian SSR. After the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact in 1939, Romania was forced to cede Moldova east of the river Prut (along with northern Bukovina) to the Soviet Union in 1940. Between 1941 and 1944, it was under Romanian control. In 1944 the Soviets reclaimed the territory, and in 1947 the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) was established. The same year, the territory was formally ceded to the Soviet Union under the Paris Peace Treaty.³

The population of Moldova is ethnically differentiated. The main ethnic groups include: Moldavians/Romanians (64.5 percent), Ukrainians (13.8 percent), Russians (13.0 percent), Gagauz (3.5 percent) and Bulgarians (1.8 percent).⁴ The other nationalities comprise together a little less than 3.5 percent of the population. Although Romanian is the official language in the country⁵, Russian and Gagauz (a Turkish dialect) are also used by relatively large parts of the population. Moldova is the most densely populated country in the CIS (129 persons per sq. km), but at the same time one of the least urbanized (53.9 percent of population lives in rural areas).⁶

¹ Source: World Bank Development Indicators database, 2003.

² As in July 1997.

³ OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission. Republic Moldova, Local Elections 25 May 2003. International Observer Guide, p. 9

⁴ We should be aware that although the numbers reported are the most recent indicators of ethnic structure of Moldovan population, they correspond to the situation in 1989 and have little in common with the current status.

⁵ In 1940, after Soviet annexation, the Cyrillic script was introduced and the language was referred to as Moldavian up until 1989 when the Latin alphabet was reintroduced.

⁶ 2001 World Bank Development Indicators.

The main religion in Moldova is Orthodox Christianity. It counts among its followers up to 90 percent of the population.

Moldova was one of the first Soviet republics to have a strong independence movement. Similar to Baltic states a process of detachment from the Soviet Union and independent nation-building started already in 1990. In June 1991, Moldova instituted its own citizenship. On August 27 the Moldovan Parliament proclaimed independency of the Republic of Moldova. In December 1991 Moldova joined CIS, and its independence was recognized by Russia and international community.⁷

In 1990 (i.e., one year before Moldova attained a full independence), in face of overall liberalization, increasingly overt expressions of Moldovan national identity and ethnically based emotions, the hard-line Communist leaders declared the creation of the Transnistrian Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic on the eastern bank of the river Dniester. At the same time, the Gagauz minority announced the formation of its own republic in the south of the country. In May 1992 a full-scale civil war erupted between Moldova and Transnistria Republic. Transnistrians supported by Russian forces attempted to forcefully take over the west bank city of Bender. The short, but intensive war was brought to an end through a cease-fire agreement in July 1992. Very soon an agreement was reached with the Gagauz minority according to which Gagauzia was granted far-reaching autonomy within a framework of the Republic of Moldova. Unfortunately, little progress has been made since the cease-fire agreement to normalize relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria Republic. After more than ten years following the conflict, a solution to the problem is no closer than it was at the time of the case-fire. Transnistria Republic is not recognized by the international community, Russian troops are still present on the eastern bank of the Dniester river and there is lack of any political interest that would ensure Moldova's sovereignty over its entire territory and extensive autonomy of Transnistria. Currently, Transnistria is viewed in Chisinau as a part of Moldova, but in fact this part of the territory is run as an independent state.

Although, as already mentioned above, at the beginning of the 1990s separatist forces in Moldova were very strong (unification with Romania or closer political links with Russia were considered), "there is also a strong sense of a specific Moldovan identity, particularly among the Romanian-speaking majority of the population, [...], which goes back to the 19th century [...]"⁸ This was confirmed in a vote in 1994 when the population expressed the desire that Moldova should remain an independent state.

During the first decade of independence, Moldova has become a democracy with free and multiparty elections. It is the only country in CIS to have a parliamentary rather than presidential system of governance. In the middle of the 1990s the country was considered as a model of successful political and economic transformation. However, already at the end of the decade it

⁷ Only Lithuania and Romania recognized independence of the Republic of Moldova after its own declaration of independence in August 1991.

⁸ Ronnas and Orlova (2000), p. 53.

became clear that Moldova did not use the momentum and the overall social and economic outcomes are not as good as expected. Currently, the Republic of Moldova is viewed as one of the poorest and least developed countries in Europe.

1.2. Political Background

With the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the late 80s, informal political groups promoting national and cultural renaissance with pro-Romanian spirit emerged. On 31 August 1989 the Moldovan language was declared as a state language and the Cyrillic script was replaced by Latin alphabet. Two months later the First Secretary of Communist Party of Moldova (CPRM), an ethnic Russian, was replaced by ethnic Moldovan, Petro Lucinschi. The Democratic Movement of Moldova, later renamed Popular Front (PF), became the main pro-independence movement. Although it was not allowed to participate in the 1990 elections for the Supreme Soviet of the Moldovan SSR, many pro-independence Moldovan politicians were elected, including activists of the PF. Parliament adopted the tree-colored official flag and removed Communist symbols. Some slogans to join Romania started appearing in Moldova.

These acts triggered the political protests in Transnistria on the left bank of the Dniester river, with a large share of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, and also in Gagauzia in the south of Moldova. In September 1990 Transnistria voted for autonomy in an unrecognized referendum. At the same time, the Gagauz, a Turkish-speaking minority of Christian Orthodox denomination, announced the formation of its own republic in the south of the country.

As mentioned in Section 1.1, unfortunately, little progress has been made since the cease-fire agreement to normalize relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria Republic despite of ten years of political negotiations under the OSCE patronage. In 1999 Russia agreed to withdraw its troops from Transnistria by 2002. In 2001 five-sided talks started at finding an adequate solution to the Transnistrian conflict. A progress is rather minor. The first convoy carrying munitions left in early October 2002 followed by further evacuations in the next months. However, Russia failed to meet original deadline of full demilitarization of Transnistria.

In July 2001 the OSCE put forward a proposal for transformation of Moldova into a federal state that would include territory of both bank of Dniester river and have a common currency, customs, armed forces and Moldovan in Latin script as official language. Within the new state Transnistria would enjoy the status of an autonomous region. Despite of criticism of the plan, Moldova accepted a proposal as a chance for unification of the country. However, Transnistrian authorities criticized the proposal, preferring the establishment of a confederation in which Republic of Moldova and Transnistria will be considered separate political entities. In March 2003 president Voronin put forward a proposal for the preparation of new constitution of Moldova that should be accepted by referendum and would follow by elections of president and parliament on entire territory. The course of the debate raises doubts if it can bring a breakthrough.

In sum, after more than ten years following the conflict, a solution to the problem is not much closer than it was at the time of the case-file. Transnistria Republic is not recognized by the international community, Russian troops are still present in Transnistria and there is lack of any political interest that would ensure Moldova's sovereignty over its entire territory and extensive autonomy of Transnistria.

Frozen conflict with Transnistria has impeded the process of building a fully independent state. Because of the conflict the country is open for external intervention and faces security problems. Although Transnistria is viewed in Chisinau as a part of Moldova, in fact this part of the territory is run as an independent state. Existence of the Moldovan Transnistrian Republic over a decade led, in reality, to significant differentiation of political and economic systems on different sides of the Dniester. The Republic of Moldova (RM) has made some impressive steps toward democratization, market economy and de-socialization of public life, and a rebirth of Romanian culture. At the same time, Transnistria has been ruled by semi-dictatorial government, maintaining the central role of the state in the economy and continuing to use the Soviet symbols, and Russian as the state language. Western governments, though, continue to stress the territorial integrity of Moldova and shy away from direct contact with the authorities of Transnistria.

Internal conflict and strong pro-Russian orientation of Transnistrian authorities have impeded crystallization of vectors of the Moldovan politics. After a decade after the demise of the Soviet Union, the political actors of the Republic of Moldova continue to situate themselves along a spectrum ranging from supporters of some form of political union with Romania, to those in favor of independence, to those desiring some degree of reintegration with Russia and the former Soviet Republic. Controversies around Russian as a state language, the name of the official language (Moldovan or Romanian), dual citizenship and the content of school history textbooks returned on the political agenda after victory of Communists in 2001 elections. Only recently, the pro-Romanian attitude has been transformed into a strong pro-European approach while the option for the Russian-Belarus Union has been slightly mitigated. Still, the priorities of external orientation of Moldova Republic are unclear as the ruling Communists simultaneously express willingness to join the Russian-Belarus Union, Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the European Union. Finally, despite the fact that the populations of Moldova and Transnistria suffer from the division of the country, some individuals and groups profit from it. All these factors complicate the current negotiations over re-integration of both part of the republic.

1.3. Social Issues

Citizens of Moldova enjoy a relatively high level of education. Literacy among the adult population (people of 15 and above) is 99% (see Annex: Table 1) and the country has a system of universal free secondary education; there is also a developed network of universities (in recent years, the educational system in the country has been suffering from a lack of financial resources). Following national traditions of the peoples living in Moldova and as a Soviet legacy, the role of

women in public life is high. Women have free and equal access to education and jobs in public administration. At the same time, however, representation of women in the highest bodies of the executive and legislative powers is disproportionately low.

Although Communist ideology was officially eliminated and the institutional framework inherited from the Soviet system has been gradually changed, the Soviet mentality is still present among ordinary citizens and state officials. The impact of the Soviet system is still visible in centralized structures of governing bodies, over-bureaucratization of the state apparatus, low legal culture among both civil servants and citizens, and lack of respect of private ownership and individual rights. Corruption remains common among state officials, officers in law enforcement agencies and other public employees.⁹

Since Moldova became an independent state in 1991, it has suffered from a deepening social crisis. The main elements of this crisis include: (i) enormous decline in income and growing income differentiation (in recent years income inequality has increased significantly, in 2002 the Gini coefficient of income inequality¹⁰ was equal to 0.406), (ii) growing poverty (in the year 2000 the share of the population with the income less than half of the subsistence minimum¹¹ was about 53.4 percent, with 64 percent of the poor living in rural areas)¹², and (iii) sharply deteriorating nutrition. Poverty is much higher in villages than in urban communities. At the same time, rural population suffers, to greater extent, from rapid deterioration of the Soviet-built infrastructure (roads, schools, water supply systems, etc.), poor social services, and lack of market for agriculture products. As mentioned by Ronnas and Orlova (2000) roots of this crisis come from low economic performance and as a result low wages and social payments¹³ (see Section 1.4).

Low wages and lack of perspectives of professional development lead to the increase of migration of the productive section of the population. According to Mosteaga and Muteanu (2003), there are more than 600 thousand people (1/3 of total labor force) working abroad. In 2002 the amount of remittances reached the level of about 250 million U.S. dollars (i.e., it was almost the same as the total salary fund of the Republic of Moldova).¹⁴

The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Report ranks Moldova in the group of Medium Human Development countries as the 104th out of the 173 countries ranked (Human Development Index - the conventional international measure of country's living standards - dropped from 0.720 in 1980 to 0.701 in 2000).¹⁵

⁹ According to evaluations by Transparency International (see Carasciuc, 2001), Moldova is placed in the group of countries with a high index of corruption (on a descending scale of 10 to 0 (with 0 representing a total corruption) Moldova scored 2.6 in 2000 (76th place in the world).

¹⁰ The Gini coefficient measures the degree of inequality (usually income) on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 represents perfect equality and 1 maximum inequality.

¹¹ 207 lei in the year 2000.

¹² Moldova. Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002.

¹³ In 2001 the average salary was at the level of about 37.8 U.S. dollars (491 lei), and average monthly pension at the level of 7 U.S. dollars (91.7 lei).

¹⁴ See Gorelova (2003).

¹⁵ Moldova's ranking is lower than all the Former Soviet Union economies, with the exception of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

1.4. Economic Performance

In the Soviet era central planning covered the whole national economy of the Moldavian SSR and, actually, this was the only regulatory mechanism. The system of economic management was a part of the Soviet command model. The Republic could work out its own plans only within the production targets and limits of resources approved by the all-Union authorities in Moscow. The collapse of the Soviet Union transformed virtually overnight Moldova from a small cogwheel in a giant economy, completely isolated from the outside of the world, into a small open economy and independent state. The economic shock resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union affected an economic position of the country through (i) the disruption of trade links and distribution channels (Moldova suddenly lost both its main source of inputs and its market for outputs), (ii) deterioration of its terms of trade due to the liberalization of the price of energy (a key and fully imported component of Moldova's domestic costs), and, consequently, high costs of imports of energy and raw materials (Ronnas and Orlova, 2000). The conflict in Transnistria in 1992 and a series of natural disasters (floods in 1992 and 1994) harmed economic recovery. Continuing regional instability and, especially, the effects of the Russian crisis of 1998 also had a very negative impact on the development of the national economy. As a consequence, starting from independence each year (except 1997) negative economic growth was observed. In the year 1999 real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached only 29.9 percent of the level of the year 1990. Following the regional financial crisis in 1998, Moldova has made significant progress toward achieving and retaining macroeconomic and financial stabilization.¹⁶ It has implemented many structural and institutional reforms that are indispensable for efficient functioning of a market economy. The results of these efforts have helped maintain economic stability, enabled the resumption of economic growth, and contributed towards the creation of an environment that is conducive to the long-term economic growth. For the past three years economic performance has been positive, benefiting from favorable external factors, prudent fiscal and monetary policies, structural reforms in the agriculture and energy sectors. In particular, real GDP growth of 2.1 percent and 5.0 percent was observed in the years 2000 and 2001, respectively. At the same time, strong export growth and large inflows of workers' remittances led to a significant improvement in the current account deficit (to 7.5 percent of GDP). These positive developments continued in 2002. Real GDP growth reached 5 percent, with inflation kept below 8 percent and small further improvement in the current account .¹⁷

Despite these efforts, and the recent resumption of economic growth, Moldova continues to have one of the lowest levels of income per capita in Europe and lower than the average for CIS countries. In 2000, the nominal GDP per capita in U.S. dollars amounted to about 360 and GDP per capita adjusted for PPP¹⁸ per capita reached the level of 1916 U.S. dollars.¹⁹ Total GDP in current U.S. dollars in 2001 reached the level of 1.5 billion. At the same time, the underground economy in

¹⁶ See *Moldova. Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002* for details.

¹⁷ *Republic of Moldova. Staff Report for the 2002 Article IV Consultation ...*, 2002

¹⁸ PPP –Purchasing Power Parity

¹⁹ *Poverty Reduction, Growth and Debt Sustainability in Low-Income CIS Countries*, IMF, World Bank, 2002

Moldova is believed to amount to about 50 percent of GDP. Moreover, in the last several years Moldova has become one of the region's most heavily indebted countries. Total external debt increased from virtually zero at the beginning of the 1990s to over 1.2 billion U.S. dollars (over 83 percent of GDP) at the end of 2001. Additionally, there remain outstanding external arrears on energy imports to foreign suppliers estimated at 298 million U.S. dollars or about 20 percent of GDP. Furthermore, the privatization process slowed significantly in 2001.

Although many basic policies aimed at economic development are in place, there is little active enforcement of laws on the protection of private property and the freedom to engage in entrepreneurial activity. As a result, the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Moldova is very low. In 2001, the cumulative inflow of FDI reached in 2001 the level of 420 million U.S. dollars (approximately the level of FDI flowing to Estonia each year).²⁰ In 2001 the Index of Economic Freedom, developed by Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal, placed Moldova in the category of "Mostly Unfree" as 105th out of 155 countries .

Thus, even though some indicators of economic recovery have been observed in the last three years, still a lot needs to be done in the area of economic development. In particular, Moldova lacks sufficient foreign and domestic investment, while its economy still remains vulnerable to external shocks (periodic droughts and regional financial contagion), and the country faces financial problems associated with a large foreign debt service burden.

2. Development of Civil Society and Democratic Institutions in Moldova

2.1. Institutional Development

A sequence of events since 1991 determined the political development of Moldova. Lack of consensus on independence among all national minorities made consolidation of the Moldovan statehood difficult and left the process of democratization of the political system in a transitory stage. The presidency, parliament, system of central and local government, administrative structure and electoral code have all been subject to many changes over the last decade in a campaign mode. Although the country adopted a new constitution in 1994 and has gone through three cycles of free elections to various level of national and local government, Moldova is still viewed as a weak state with weak governmental institutions.

The 1994 Constitution provided for separation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. However, locus of power in the Moldovan political system has long been characterized by tension between the legislature and the executive. President Lucinschi tried to transform Moldova into a presidential republic in 2000. However, he failed to get the support of the Parliament. Instead, the Parliament amended the constitution on July 5, 2000, strengthening the

²⁰ Inflow of FDI to Moldova decreased form 100 million U.S. dollars in the year 2000 to 60 million dollars in 2001.

powers of the legislative and abolishing direct presidential elections. Elected by the Parliament, the President nominates the Prime Minister, based on the distribution of party power in the Parliament.

Paradoxically enough, constitutional amendments combined with the outcome of February 2001 parliamentary elections brought a major change in the balance of power toward presidency. The Communists secured 71 of 101 seats in the legislative (a constitutional majority) and elected their party leader, Vladimir Voronin as President of Moldova. Having control of both the executive and legislative branches, the CPRM also became a dominant political force at the local level as a result of 2003 local elections. Although the last elections reveal some limits to their ability for full control over the Moldovan politics, shortcomings observed during the campaign remain a source of concerns. Most importantly, there are few real checks and balances in the new political system.²¹ It raises concerns that a consolidation of democracy in Moldova could come under threat.

Political changes of 2001 affected also the structure of local government, which was introduced by the 1999 administrative reform. In March 2003 the ten regions (judets) were replaced by 33 districts (rayons), as they had existed in the Soviet times up to 1999. In addition, the municipality of Chisinau and Gagauzia autonomous region remained separate units. Furthermore, the number of municipalities and communes rose from 644 to 907, again reversing the 1999 reform. These amendments to the law on local administration have been interpreted as a sign of perpetual efforts of Communists to set up a vertical power structure. Moreover, the electoral campaign has been qualified by many analysts and observers as the dirtiest one since independence. A significant number of observers voiced concerns about abuse of power by the ruling party and bias in the media in favor of government.

Over the past decade Moldova has had a good record with regards to national elections. Despite some shortcomings, elections were labeled as "free and fair" by OSCE/ODIHR standards. The main legal basis for the conduct elections and referenda is the electoral code, adopted in November 1997 and amended several times afterwards. The amendments, which were passed in 2001, raised the threshold to 6 percent for parties, 9 percent for coalitions of two parties, and 12 percent for a coalition of three or more parties. In effect, only three parties managed to clear the threshold and got parliamentary mandates. Almost one third of the votes cast were lost under those conditions.

However, the most important problem stems from the fact that Moldova's electoral system has discouraged the creation of strong and stable parties linked to clear constituencies. Moldova's proportional representation system has functioned on the basis of a closed party list ballot, with the entire country considered a single electoral district. This creates few incentives for parties to reach out to distinct constituencies, or for politicians, once elected to feel a sense of obligation towards the voters who put them in office²². Calls for the introduction of a mixed electoral system that would incorporate some single member constituencies into the present system of party voting have failed

²¹ It is worth to mention that the new system has been recently described as a (pseudo) parliamentary system (Iulian Fruntasu, *O istorie etnopolitica a Basarabia: 1812-2000* Editura Cartier, Bucuresti-Chisinau, 2002, p. 438).

²² King (2000), p. 160.

to be implemented²³. Communists benefit from the present system of party-voting lists and are not interested in electoral reform.

Under the current legislation the process of the registration of a political party in Moldova is rather simple (new parties should collect 5000 signatures of supporters). Currently 26 political parties are registered by Ministry of Justice and are entitled to participate in elections in 2003. However, it must be noted that in November 2002 the Communists tried to raise the threshold for the registration of political parties from 5000 to 15000 members but they failed to get parliamentary support for the proposal.

Since 1991 Moldova has established a judicial system and a basic legislative framework for justice administration. The Constitutional Court is actively involved in examining petitions from state and judicial bodies. The Supreme Court periodically issues interpretations of current legislation by courts. The criminal code was amended in 2001 in a progressive manner. Moldovan legislation guarantees human rights for all the citizens, but enforcement of law is still a problem, especially in Transnistria. Finally, despite a reluctant implementation of Council of Europe agreement, the Bessarabian Metropolitan Church was added to the official registry of religious denominations in July 2002.

To sum up, Moldova has made an impressive progress in adoption of democratic standards of legislation and rule of law. Implementation of some part of legislation still raises concern, though. The achievements of the decade of transition to democracy are mainly hampered by inefficient administration, lack of adequate financing of public bodies, poverty, territorial separatism and corruption of state officials. However, it should be underlined that in spite of serious political and constitutional crises, the political system of the country works and is kept largely on democratic track.

2.2. Civil Society Organizations

Political parties

The Moldovan party system has been characterized by instability and fragmentation, especially in the center. Parties change their names, split, merge, and form short-lived personal and political alliances. Some parties won elections only to fail to return to parliament the next time. The exemplary case is the Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova (ADPM), which from more than 43 percent in 1994 fell to 3.6 percent in 1998 and has since been of negligible importance. Moreover, a change of the political landscape after every cycle of elections has been a standard phenomenon (see Annex, Table 2).

Despite a shifting party landscape, we can agree with the diagnosis, provided by Charles King, that three main blocs of parties have remained largely as they were at the time of independence:

²³ East European Constitutional Review, Vol 11-12, Fall 2002 and Winter 2003, p. 35.

- (i) pro-Romanian block supported by intelligentsia and Moldovans who benefited from reforms of early 90s;
- (ii) a vast centrist block committed to maintaining their position of power within the privatized agricultural and agro-industrial sector and motivated more by patronage than ideology;
- (iii) resurgent left, composed both of dissatisfied ethnic minorities hard hit by the post-1989 cultural changes and increasing number of Moldovans dissatisfied with decline of living standards caused by economic transition and political infighting²⁴.

It needs to be recognized, however, that the relations between these blocks have been changing over decade.

In the early 1990s the most vivid part of political spectrum was the pro-Romanian bloc with National Front (NF) as its core. The NF called for democratization, national revival, privatization and unification with Romania. Dissolution of the NF after independence gave birth to several parties (Christian Democratic People's Party (CDPP), National Liberal Party and other). At the same time, the popular support for all of them decreased almost threefold. Since 1994 elections they have all together received around 10 percent of cast votes. The opposite side of the spectrum was occupied by the strongly pro-Soviet/pro-Russian "Interfront" and other pro-Communist groupings stemming from banned Communist Party. Between these two movements the Social Democratic Party was located.

Since the 1994 parliamentary elections the Moldovan political scene was dominated by a large moderate party of the former nomenclatura members (ADPM), accompanied by the radical Socialist Party and moderate parties of both sides of the cultural cleavage (i.e., the Union of Democratic Forces). Battles over privatisation as well as presidential ambitions of ex-Communist leaders like Snegur and Lucinschi gave way to the decline of the ADPM and appearance of new parties formed around some ambitious leaders (Party of Reconciliation and Rebirth, Movement For Democratic and Prosperous Moldova, Democratic Party). Common economic and political interests of competing factions rather than party names or doctrines defined perpetual reshaping of the center of the party spectrum. This tendency continued after the 1998 parliamentary elections when several center-right parties launched an uneasy pro-reform coalition to counter the Communists and to accelerate economic transformation. However, these parties failed to secure a parliamentary majority for the reform government for a longer period. At the same time, non-ethnic questions of economic reforms and social burden of transition tended to dominate the agenda. It explains why the Christian Democratic Popular Party — which previously had been the most anti-Communist of all the factions — joined the leftists in supporting Sturza's ouster in November 1999. This case clearly shows an erosion of politicization²⁵ of Moldovan politics in the late 1990s resulting in the lack of clear messages for electorate. Shifting political alliances, muddling through, lack of defined party visions of reforms, cronyism, and sometimes corruption – all of these factors paved

²⁴ King (2000), p. 164.

²⁵ Fruntasu (2002), pp-461-477.

the way for the Communist victory. Attempts to build a united center-right electoral block were undertaken too late and failed just before elections of 2001.

In parallel, the Communist Party (CPRM) has firmly established itself as a dominant political force on the left. CPRM became the biggest parliamentary party in 1998, and afterwards went on to win an outright majority of the vote in 2001, followed by almost a half of the votes cast won in local election 2003.

We have to note, however, that the Communists did not fulfill their populist promises and avoided a large-scale reversal of reforms. The same refers to the political sphere. Although certain moves by the Communist government were highly contentious (media, attitude toward opposition), simultaneous efforts of the opposition and international community forced the government to stick to democratic standards.

Finally, the Braghish Alliance Electoral Block, which was transformed into Our Moldova Block (OMB) in 2003, functions as a loose coalition of center-left pragmatic politicians and smaller party groups of similar image. This grouping would, in reality, be a new hub of crystallization of the centre. Some prerequisites for fulfilling such a mission are noticeable. OMB managed to break out of the ethnic cleavage of the left (Russian-speaking urban intelligentsia) and to attract a part of the pro-Romanian urban and rural intelligentsia. However, the leaders of the Block have shown little capacity to meet this opportunity so far. Two smaller parties with prospect for future existence, namely the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) as well as PSL-PSD coalition seem to be less important from this point of view.

Thus, in the light of the above, after a decade of independence the Moldovan party system consists of three components as it did at the beginning of decade. However, time and experience have made some difference. All of the parties are currently on a way forward that requires transcending the cleavage of ethnic identity policy which gave birth to all of them.

Non-governmental organizations

Prior to the declaration of independence in 1991, some informal organizations were formed in the Moldavian SSR, which later predominantly joined the Democratic Movement of Moldavia for Perestroika, later renamed the Popular Front (PF). Disarray of the PF after independence gave birth to some political parties and youth organizations affiliated to them. The most important ones included Christian Democratic Popular Party and Christian Democratic Youth Union. Other political parties also tried to establish similar organizations (of youth, women etc.) in different time periods and with rather minor success. An exception can be the Communist Party of Moldova (CPM), established in 1993, that managed to transform the Union of the Youth (the former Komsomol) into the new Komsomol, which collaborates strongly with the CPM. It claims to have 4000 members. Organizations of this kind are perceived as part of the political landscape rather than a subdivision of the NGO sector as such. However, about 16 percent of existing NGOs collaborate with political parties.

Basically, the NGO sector is composed of the following three segments:

- I. The first group represents social organizations inherited from Soviet times like: (i) cultural associations of free professionals (unions of writers, composers, journalists); (ii) organizations of social sector (Unions of Pensioners, Veterans of War and Work etc.); (iii) gender ones (unions of women, youth); (iv) advocacy (i.e. Associations of Victims of Chernobyl); (v) ethnic minority associations; and (vi) sport and leisure unions and clubs. In most cases organizations of this group managed to maintain material base and develop infrastructure and were supported financially by the state budget means. That created favorable conditions for their activities at the beginning of transition. It is worth mentioning that some of them, especially cultural organizations, were very active in the initial period of systemic changes (unions of writers, journalists, educational organizations etc.). However, only a few of them were able to transform into free and democratic associations (i.e. Union of Journalists). Others continue to act in the old manner and face growing difficulties to meet their objectives in the changing environment (it refers particularly to old social sphere organizations). Drying support from the state budget, on the one hand, and deterioration of living conditions of large part of population, on the other hand, make their mission not an easy task. At the same time they are reportedly less prepared/fortunate to get grants from the tenders announced by international donors. For these reasons organizations of this group tend to support ruling parties of any political configurations. The number of old organizations is decreasing and amounts to about 100. A separate place among them is occupied by the old trade unions, which are excluded from our analysis.

- II. The second group of NGOs consists of new organizations that were created after independence in order to solve some social problems or to promote new ideas and group interests. First human rights groups, ecological organizations, students' leagues, associations of civic education and new organizations of youth appeared in 1992-1995. Many of them arose spontaneously around single leaders whereas their structures were far from being developed. However, after some period, they were able to get support from international donors (Soros Foundation, World Bank and others) that helped them to grow. Donors' support has been crucial for the recognition of the NGO sector by public structures. The years from 1995 to 1997 marked a turn in the process of institutionalization of NGOs in Moldova. The adoption of the Law on Public Association in 1996 and a subsequent re-registration of existing organizations in conformity with new legislation helped create favorable conditions for founding democratic organizations. Since 1998 the process of mushrooming of new NGOs has been visible. The main motives underlying this process included: success stories of the forerunners, more developed structures of resource centers, easier access to information about grants opportunities, personal ambitions to leadership, looking for alternative ways of

solving acute social problems and finding attractive work, non-limited and concrete at the same time are the most frequent explanations for the reasons for involvement. The main financial source of the NGOs in Moldova come from the grants offered by external donors.

The end of the 1990s witnessed new tendencies in the development of Moldovan NGOs belonging to this group. Firstly, NGOs extended their activities to some new fields (think tanks, regional development, prevention of trafficking in women, public administration etc.). Secondly, Moldovan NGOs were able to form coalitions for the promotion of interests regarding human rights, combating torture, advocacy actions and environment. Thirdly, a network of resource centers for NGOs has been created offering a range of training, consulting, information services and technical assistance. The centers work on the national level and local level, delivering support to the entire sector (CONTACT) or serving as resource centers in particular fields: human rights (CREDO), mass-media organizations (Center for Independent Journalism), women's movements (National Center of Studies and Information on the Women's Problems), Center PILIGRIM-Demo as resource center for the association from the Transnistria region. The National Youth Council, SIEDO and ADEPT can be classified as organizations of intermediary support.²⁶ Fourthly, a new form of popularization of its achievements appeared: the Forum of NGOs, a bi-annual meeting of representatives of all fields of their activities. Exchange experience, meeting with donors, the media and discussions on future forms of activity of the movement are the focus of their concern. However, implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Forums is still far from being satisfactory and results in some controversies on the agenda for the meeting. Finally, a new wave of establishing of grass-root organizations in rural communities is observed. It was triggered by the adoption of National Strategy of Poverty Reduction and the programs of rural and regional development financed by World Bank, TACIS and other donors. These strategies stipulate the collaboration between NGOs and local authorities to solve a number of local problems.

- III. "Governmental" NGOs (GONGOs) – an alternative to the independent organizations, established after 2001 (i.e., after the Communist Party took power in Moldova). Their mission seems to be the imitation of the opinion of genuine NGOs in some areas, which are particularly sensitive to the government (e.g. media) or participation in the organizations, where presence of NGOs is specified by law.

It needs to be mentioned, however, that independent NGOs try to build coalitions based on common values and interests to prevent deterioration of democratic standards, institutions and

²⁶ USAID NGO Sustainability Index 2003: Country Report Moldova.

practices. Coalition initiated by the Independent Center of Journalism against the antidemocratic abuses of freedom of media by authorities can be quoted as an example of such activity. The most recent evidence of establishing coalition for promoting democratic values was the activity of a number of NGOs during the 2003 local elections in Moldova. The League for Defense of Human Rights in Moldova (LADOM) recruited, trained and accredited about 2,000 observers while the Helsinki Committee and a few other civil society organizations deployed a handful of observers on election days. The Association for Participatory Democracy (ADEPT) produced civic education materials for these elections and The Association for Civic and Political Culture provided the public with a critical analysis of the electoral process. Experience gained in the course of the electoral campaign has become a starting point for a heated debate for creating the NGO coalition, For Democracy and Human Rights. Civic education, advocacy actions for changing an electoral law, assessment of functioning of democratic institutions, observation of human rights and searching of methods that would increase participation of youth in political life are at the center of the debate. Coming Forum of NGOs in September is expected to elaborate a strategy for the coalition.

According to the latest “Study on the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Republic of Moldova” at the end of 2001 there were 2758 NGOs registered in Moldova. Possibilities for setting up NGOs in Transnistria have been rather limited. Nevertheless, about 300 NGOs have been registered in Transnistria recently under the specific Transnistrian legislation on public associations.

In both cases, i.e., in Moldova and in Transnistria, the real number of NGOs is much smaller. The study of the sector undertaken by the National Assistance and Information Center for NGOs in Moldova CONTACT indicated that only 1770 organizations out of the total number of 2758 organizations registered exist. Moreover, large part of these organizations is not active (did not perform any action during the last two years). The estimations of the exact number of active NGOs differ. While CONTACT suggests that not more than 30-50 percent (i.e., 500 -900) of all NGOs really work, UNDP Human Development Report 2002 estimates that there are only 270 active NGOs in Moldova. Moreover, in the case of those that are active, it is not always clear what programs they undertake, what finances are available to them, how transparent they are, etc.

The study of NGOs in Moldova undertaken by the National Assistance and Information Center for NGOs in Moldova CONTACT identified about 65 percent of NGOs on the national level and about 35 percent on the local level. Most national NGOs are located in urban areas (99 percent), especially in Chisinau (98 percent). Similarly the majority of local NGOs is situated in urban areas (66 percent). The majority of NGOs is constituted as public organizations (91 percent), and only 4 percent as institutions, 3 percent as foundations and 2 percent as public movements.²⁷ The most popular areas of interest include: education and research (26 percent), health (11 percent), culture, art and entertainment (10 percent), and sport (10 percent). The breakdown of Moldovan NGOs by the principal field of activity is presented in Figure 1.

²⁷ See *Study on the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Republic of Moldova*.

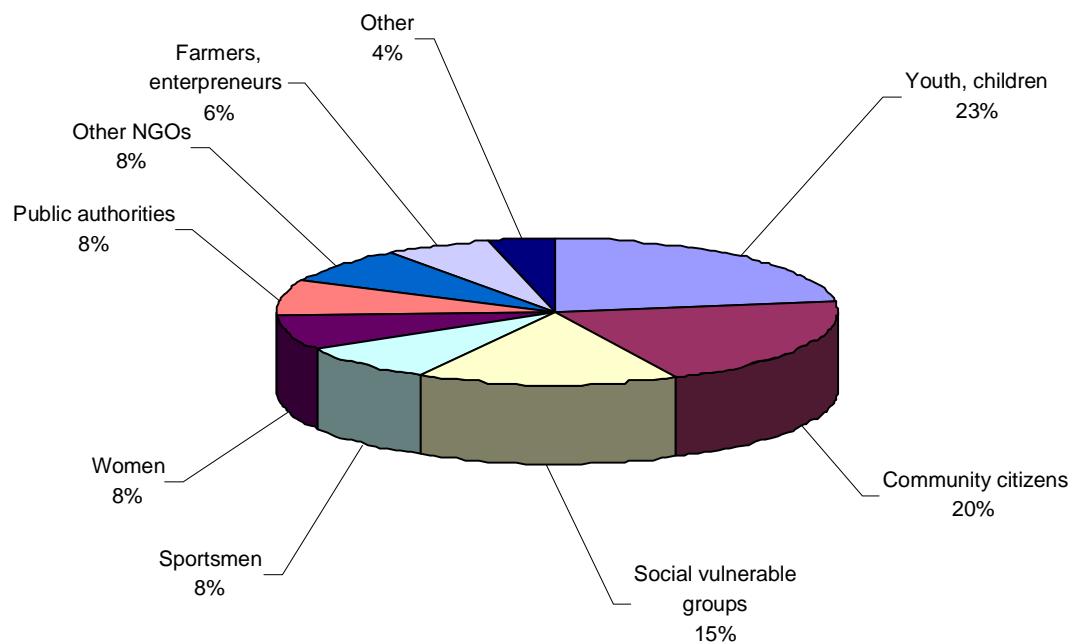
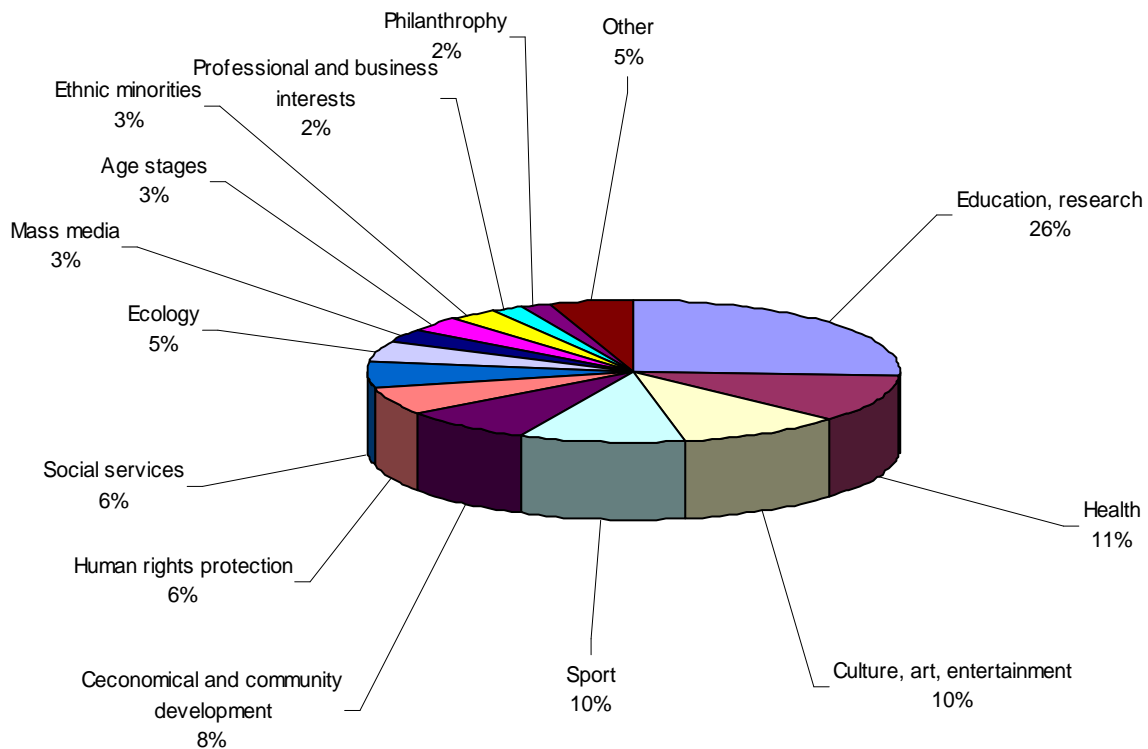


Figure 1. Breakdown of Moldovan NGOs by the principal field of activity²⁸

Main beneficiaries of Moldovan NGOs include: youth and children (23 percent), community residents (20 percent) and socially vulnerable groups (15 percent). The breakdown of Moldovan NGOs by target groups is presented in Figure 2.

²⁸ *Ibidem.*



To Figure 2. Break down of Moldovan NGOs by target groups²⁹

To summarize, there are three groups of NGOs in Moldova. Each group has a different historical development path, sources of finance and motivation for undertaking activities. Nevertheless, NGOs in the Republic of Moldova cover practically all fields of activity. Although the exact number of NGOs in the country can be a subject of discussion, there is no doubt that the quantitative evolution of the non-governmental sector in Moldova has a tendency to grow (in the period 1997-2001, compared to 1992-1996 the number of NGOs grew twofold and a half) and develop (especially after the adoption in 1996 of the Law on Public Association).

3. Features of Civil Society and Democratic Institutions in Moldova

3.1. Participation of youth in civic life

Difficult socio-economic situation of the country creates serious disincentives to effective engagement of the Moldovan youth in public life. The educated urban youth is minimally interested in non-profit civic activity, which is not perceived as a prestigious enough component of their

²⁹ *Ibidem.*

career. Students and young professionals constitute a group, which suffers from confusion, frustration and cynicism while assessing their long-term career prospects in the country, and prefers to adopt a short-term perspective of personal utility and survival. This relative disinterest in social activism also has economic grounds. Students often receive substantial remittances from their parents working abroad which are spent on conspicuous consumption. After graduation only those with the right origin and connections may be assured of employment in the country, while most are likely to emigrate for work. The harsh conditions of country life and bleak prospects of local employment make the rural youth even more vulnerable to the 'brain drain' of migration to the capital city and living off their parents' money or of emigration in search of a job abroad. The majority of those who stay in the rural areas in turn lack the necessary educational and financial resources to engage in civic activity.

Those young people who nonetheless were willing to be active were bound to be disillusioned by the youth organizations which either continued into the 1990s from the Soviet period or were in the process of establishment in the first part of the decade. One of the leaders of the modern youth movement openly accuses those organizations of 'forgetting' the youth and its real interests through their paternalism, conservatism and opportunism. He blames the institutions which dominated the Moldovan youth scene prior to 1998 for compounding the disillusionment with public activity, which induced emigration or passivity.

The development of the national youth organizations proceeded in two phases, which are separated by the reforms to the organization of the National Youth Council in 1998, resulting from greater involvement of international agencies, in particular the Council of Europe. The organizations which dominated the scene in the first period could be divided into holdovers from the Communist period, on the one hand, and new student and youth party organizations, on the other. The post-Soviet institutions retained older conservative leaders who lacked conviction about the abilities of the youth to generate ideas, manage activities, time and money. They limited the activities to a narrow range, concentrating on sports events, art exhibitions and cultural performances. The organizations catered to the select few, providing recognition to the children of rich parents who could make financial contributions.

The youth associations emerging in the early 1990s at universities and political parties did not help to develop civic activism, either. Student organizations were built around unelected, self-appointed leaders, bent on creating personal networks for purposes of fast career development. Not surprisingly their leaderships could not demonstrate commitment to any specific and constant set of values and were passive in generating strategic ideas. Another reason why the youth organizations were not perceived as representative of young people's interests was their lack of political independence. Political parties treated affiliated youth organizations as vote and membership generators and allegations were made of the infiltration of the ranks of student organizations by state security apparatus. Finally, the organizations did not represent the majority of the youth, which lived in rural areas, as they were located almost exclusively in Chisinau and other major cities.

International agencies, such as Council of Europe, UNICEF, the representations of Western governments (embassies) and charities (e.g. Save the Children) have played a key role in reforming the youth movement, which accounts for greater activism of the youth in general, and the rural and marginal groups, in particular. At present nearly a quarter of the beneficiaries of non-governmental sector in Moldova are children and teenagers.

The crucial element for the success has been realization on part of donors of what mistakes were made. Earlier the donors simply placed structures tested abroad on the local unreformed leaders, accepted their empty mission statements at face value and concentrated on building the skills of the local leadership without verifying the contact of these organizations with the local youth. Upon realizing that the investment into organizational development did not yield a measurable expansion of civic activity, the international actors stimulated internal change in the umbrella organization of Moldovan youth NGOs, the National Youth Council. Of particular importance was the conditionality of assistance upon demonstrable activity with the wider youth and stress on process of writing good proposals. Some internal factors were crucial, on the other hand, for giving the network independence from political pressures. On the one hand, the new Law on Association no longer permitted registering political parties as NGOs, forcing all the youth parties to leave the Council. On the other hand, the network attracted a strong leader who had earlier demonstrated his serious commitment to quality by leaving the Council when it did not meet the standards.

Currently 37 organizations, stimulating youth activism in various fields, are members of the reorganized National Youth Council. A measure of progress is the fact that seven organizations had to leave the Council when they could not demonstrate activity in the field. Other signs of qualitative progress toward developing a healthier sector include:

- learning the standards through observation and horizontal contacts with similar structures,
- external and mutual monitoring (from the Council of Europe and inside the National Youth Council),
- expansion into the countryside,
- opening up the resources to non-institutional actors (resource centers, youth initiatives),
- stress on electoral process and transparency,
- maintaining cooperation with the Transnistrian NGOs and publishing their work.

But many problems remain. It must be noted, nonetheless, that the youth organization sector is vibrant enough to address some of these issues on its own, as the following initiatives demonstrate.

European Youth Exchange Moldova and the Center for Documentation and Information on Children's Rights have worked within the project "Youth participation in local administration" on two components of civic education. First, in collaboration with the Ministry for Youth and Sports, the two organizations have offered trainings in children's rights to social workers in local

administration. Second, they have placed consultants in regional youth NGO resource centers to assist emerging youth leaders of local initiatives.³⁰ Through establishment of youth initiatives, which do not require official registration but are democratically set up and governed, youth leaders may learn the electoral process by doing it. Four sessions of the Children's Parliament, each involving 110 participants, have also been held in Chisinau, bringing together representatives from the entire country to identify the priorities for actions for the local and national administration and the NGO sector. Apart from education and sports, child rights were prominent. For the 15 percent of active youth leaders, trainings are open when they turn 18 on how to train other leaders and how to establish their own NGOs.

Other organizations specialize in trainings in civic rights and conflict resolution. For instance, Center for Associative Democracy ADEPT conducts trainings on democratic procedures for the party-affiliated youth organizations. Youth Helsinki Citizens' Assembly provides space for the dialogue of the youth from both sides of the Dniester in its journal "Collage," where particular emphasis is placed on the value of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. It is noteworthy that the journal is fully trilingual, running parallel sections in English, Romanian and Russian.

Young people are a key audience for the practical human rights education available at LADOM (League for Defense of Human Rights), which was founded on local initiative in 1996. Young people have been mobilized as election observers and as many as 2000 persons watched the last local elections thanks to the support of Soros Foundation and U.S. Embassy. Around one hundred volunteers support the center, with the prominent participation of law students, who serve as legal consultants for the marginal groups, such as the refugees or victims of trafficking.

3.2. Public awareness campaigns and human rights

If youth sector has managed to broaden the appeal of civic education and popularize human rights, the organizations working on these issues have recorded a relatively small impact on the wider public in Moldova for two reasons. First, little public support can be rallied for civic rights due to the general passivity and lack of confidence in influencing the authorities. Second, the position of the NGOs vis-à-vis the administration is precarious, and intimidation of individual activists and of the entire organizations effectively limits the appeal of open criticism of human rights record of the government to the few professional organizations whose plight is closely monitored by their Western audience. As a result, the non-governmental sector's activities in the field of human rights are restricted to publishing the information on the situation in human rights in Moldova for foreign audiences. Human rights organizations are not growing, and remain oriented towards Western and not national audience.

³⁰ Its National Youth Resource Center can be found on the Web at: www.youth.md. The Youth Foundation 21st Century has established another Web youth resource center at its "Moldovan Youth Site" (www.infotin.moldova.net)

There is a generally low level of confidence in the Moldovan society in the ability of non-elites to take effective part in public life. Analyzing the results of the Public Opinion Barometer as of November 2001 and March 2002, we can notice that to the question “How do you think people like you can influence important decisions made at local level in your community?” the majority answered “to a small extent, very small extent/not at all” (cumulated 72 percent of respondents in November 2001 and 74 percent of respondents in 2002). The level of confidence tends to decrease over time, as the answers “to a small extent” are now replaced by “to a very small extent/not at all” (53 versus 39 percent). Similarly low levels of confidence are placed on influencing “important decisions made at national level?” where the cumulated answer “to a small extent, to a very small extent/not at all” in November 2001 and March 2002 constitutes 76 and 72 percent, respectively. These results indicate that the civil society has much to accomplish in this respect.

However, NGOs do not enjoy sufficient recognition in the wider public. When asked the question “How much confidence do you have in NGOs?” 46 percent respondents pointed to the lack of trust and 28 percent could not answer, compared to only 26 percent answers of “some, a lot of confidence.”³¹ The mistrust toward non-governmental organizations is most pervasive in the rural areas, affecting particularly the NGOs working with local government. This problem was addressed by some NGO resource centers such as CONTACT, which quickly moved from building the capacity of local non-governmental organizations to supporting programs of community development.

Civil society efforts at close cooperation with the local administration had to begin with lobbying for setting up and maintaining a decentralized and transparent system of governance. Conditions of access to the legislative process of reform were dependent on the will of the authorities. The decentralization undertaken in 1997 was preceded, on the one hand, by a series of public debates and regional roundtables in which officials, members of the Moldovan Parliament, judges, local and central government representatives and NGO representatives took part. Discussions were held on draft laws of local administration and administrative territorial reform, producing proposals which could be then submitted to parliamentary committees. The initiative was coordinated by the Young Lawyers' Association of Moldova and National Agency for Local and Regional Development with the assistance from the Information and Documentation Center of the Council of Europe and the Eurasia Foundation. On the other hand, the current Communist government has been avoiding the scrutiny of civil society to its centralization program, refusing to discuss the costs and rationales for the reform. Angry attacks were made in the state-controlled press on the organizations (Viitorul, Institute of Public Policy, Soros Foundation), which had publicized a study denying the government's claims of cost-free character of the reform. Even some of the prominent NGO leaders were intimidated by security service so that the report would not be made public.

³¹ Public Opinion Barometer of March 2002.

One reason for which non-specialized general social organizations might not choose to pick up the issue of human rights in their activities is because they are intimidated. One could quote the public announcement of the Minister of Justice, Mr. Ion Morei, who warned that public associations would be liquidated in case of involvement in politics. As this statement followed the critique of the Government's activity by some NGOs, it might be construed that a definition of 'political activities' could be interpreted quite liberally.

Although about 12 percent of all NGOs reported engagement in human rights activities³², only several specialized organizations are actively involved, maintaining their positions thanks to organizational ties to international networks (Helsinki Committee) or to recognition as editors of reports (League for Defense of Human Rights Moldova). All conduct professional work in a narrow technical sense, maintaining small permanent staff and relying mainly on volunteers. However, in the context of the unresponsiveness of the government, they need to build a sustainable support and activate the community at large so as to overcome the mistrust of the society to the idea of human rights and to human rights NGOs in general. This could be achieved by supporting the growth of designated human rights organizations both in their numbers and their territorial and human resource base.

As it will be seen in the case of freedom of media, it is impossible to register an openly human rights' organization in Transnistria. Members of civic associations willing to join the NGO assemblies in the Republic of Moldova are only able to do so by hiding their true purpose of visit. One leader of a Transnistrian NGO, which was engaged in dialogue with its Moldovan partners, was assaulted and battered for raising these issues.³³

3.3. Freedom of media

The print media market in Moldova is very politicized for two reasons: first, because newspapers cannot support themselves financially without a political patronage and second, due to direct forms of intimidation. As there is close connection between business and government, opposition newspapers are not used for advertising. Newspapers therefore have to depend on political parties or are owned by businesspeople. This further undermines the independence of their views.

A survey of 124 media organizations, undertaken in November 2002, indicates the perception of a high level of politicization in the ranks of the journalists. Only one percent of journalists believe that the field is not politicized, while 85 percent strongly disagree. Top reasons given for politicization of the media in the eyes of the journalists themselves are: "precarious economic

³² The Catalogue of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Republic of Moldova, 1998, Chisinau: Editura ARC, 1999, p. 14.

³³ Andrey Ponomaryov of Center PIRIGRIM.

condition of newspapers" (46 percent), "lack of conditions for the development of independent media" (29 percent) and "lack of mechanisms for economic protection of journalists" (13 percent).³⁴

In the Republic of Moldova the current level of media consumption is not very high. Press circulation, especially in rural areas, is limited. There are even areas characterized by informational void, signaled by mass media (e.g. Ocnita sector), to which contributed the liquidation of the local cable and national radio broadcasting stations. The press reaches a small fraction of the population. Television remains the preferred media type for 61 percent, followed by radio (27 percent) and the press (only 6.2 percent and another one percent favoring both the press and the other outlet). Half of all the respondents watch TV daily, while only about 10 percent read newspapers every day. On the other hand, as many as 31 percent urban dwellers and 40 percent rural residents have not read a newspaper in the past three months, compared to 15 percent who have not watched domestic TV broadcast.³⁵

State-owned television and radio command virtual monopoly on the news provision to the population. Nearly a half of all the respondents (47.7 percent) pointed to the state TV news as their top choice, compared to 5.4 percent going to the most popular independent news program (ProTV). Independent news can contest the state broadcast only in the urban areas (where proportions are 11.3 percent to 35.1 percent, but not in the countryside where two independent station news have attracted one percent each, while the state TV is the top choice for over 57 percent). Overall, TV Moldova and the Russian ORT have been chosen as customary news sources by two-thirds of the viewers each. Independent Moldovan news is usually watched by 6.5 to 12 percent of the population.³⁶

The state-owned electronic media are dominant nationally, and lack effective competition in rural areas. TV Moldova is available in nearly 79 percent of all Moldovan homes, while three most powerful local stations (NIT, ProTV, TV6 Balti) reach between 6.7 to 11.8 percent of the population. The difference is even greater in rural areas, where 82 percent of the population receives the state national TV, compared to 4.7 to 6 percent for the local stations. These numbers may be compared to the coverage of the foreign state channels: the Russian ORT (75 percent nationwide and 70 percent in the country) and TV Romania 1 (48 percent nationwide and 59 percent in the country).³⁷

High licensing and maintenance costs for independent electronic media remain significant obstacles to the development of independent stations. In August 2001 the licensing authority SCA warned around 40 holders of radio and TV broadcast licenses of their licenses being withdrawn in the event of not paying their debts to SCA. Also due to debts (about 300 000 MDL³⁸ for the technical license and over 50 000 MDL for the broadcast license) upon the court's decision the TV

³⁴ The survey, "Current Problems of the Media in Moldova," carried out by the IMAS Marketing and Survey Institute, Chisinau between 14 and 28 November 2002, commissioned by the Independent Journalism Center. See: Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin December 2002, p. 26.

³⁵ Survey "Mass Media in the Republic of Moldova: Access, Audiences, Preferences, Attitudes, in: Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin June 2002.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39-40.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁸ Moldovan lei.

station Catalan TV ceased to exist at the end of February. The revocation of the license and closure of Catalan TV station significantly reduced the range of local TV stations, especially because of the delay in launching new stations, Stil TV and TV Municipal, while TVM broadcasts 6 hours out of 24.³⁹

Lack of effective competition is a significant impediment to increasing the professional level of the public TV journalists. The audience have difficulties finding professional or modern native stations and rate them unfavorably when comparing them to the Russian or Romanian outlets. State TV and radio stations received the highest number of opinions of being "outdated", on the other hand.⁴⁰

Serious debate on issues of public interest is lacking in print media as well. Periodical publications print runs registered in 2001 are relatively low. The total annual print run of the 233 existing newspapers amounted to 45 018 copies. 80 journals were published with a total annual print run of 1 982 thousand copies. On this market where many newspapers compete over a small pool of revenue and no leaders have emerged to dictate the standards of the trade, newspapers cater to relatively unsophisticated readers. The main problem is the size of the market, and consequently, dependency from sponsors. The eclectic tabloid format of most socio-political weeklies (which dominate the newspaper market), where serious news analyses are placed side by side with sensationalism, indicates that they aim at recruiting as many readers as possible rather than serving a well-defined segment.

However, the unwillingness to conduct serious debate in public media and challenge the politician's statements has other reasons as well. Journalists resort to the self-censorship of their publications for fear of losing their jobs. Situation worsened when after the victory of the Communist party in 2001, the new government has tried to subordinate the media. The National Ethics Commission of the Journalists' Union stated its concern about censorship, "which since the change of the political power became manifest at public TV and radio stations and government publications". In particular, the Commission decried "the dictatorial politics pursued by the governing party at the Teleradio Moldova state company – by means of personnel dismissal, suspending certain broadcasts of political interest, by emphasizing the realities favorable only to this party, which leads to the indoctrination of society and to the suppression of political liberties."⁴¹

Such policies are unfortunately left unchecked. The government may afford to ignore the critical reports of the Soros-sponsored Independent Center of Journalism by setting up its own trade union, Association of Professional Journalists. This GONGO⁴² proved its loyalty by abstaining from condemning the negative campaign of electoral lies or the attempts at closing down the independent paper Accente. Unfortunately, the government may count on popular support for state intervention in the broadcasting content, mainly among the rural residents – 45

³⁹ Moldova Suverana, 2001, August, 16.

⁴⁰ Survey "Mass Media in the Republic of Moldova: Access, Audiences, Preferences, Attitudes, in: Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin June 2002, p. 42-43.

⁴¹ Curier media, 2001, no. 14.

⁴² "Government Organized NGO"

percent of rural respondents agree that "the state authorities must get involved in the editorial activity of media institutions," with 31 percent opposed. It must be noted that the proportions are reversed in the urban areas, but the demographic balance produces 41 percent of the total population in favor of state intervention against 36 percent of those opposed.⁴³

Journalists complain of difficult access to information, as stated in a survey carried out in September-October 2001 by the Center for the Promotion of the Freedom of Speech and Access to Information. According to this survey's data the least transparent public issues include: use of the credits obtained from abroad (indicated by 46.2 percent of those questioned), corruption (77.9 percent), specific use of budgetary resources (39.5 percent) privatization issues and public official's salaries and privileges. According to 48.1 percent of respondents of the given questionnaire, they were denied access to the required information for no reason.⁴⁴ 85 percent of journalists surveyed in November 2002 were not satisfied with the degree of access to public information, and a quarter of all respondents found the access to be "inadmissibly difficult." The overwhelming majority has encountered difficulties with the national government and its agencies or the Presidential office.⁴⁵

Public authorities also take active part in distorting the contents of information. Materials prepared by the presidential press center must by law be published by the media and failure to do so might initiate prosecution. In the course of the last local elections state-run mass media have blatantly favored the government candidates, while the president violated the pre-election silence by calling for voting against an opposition leader for the mayor of Chisinau. In response to the question "how do you think which institutions use mass media to manipulate the public opinion" 82.6 percent of journalists listed in this category political parties, mainly during the election campaigns, while 32 percent of respondents believed that this was characteristic of authorities and public institutions in general.⁴⁶

Self-censorship of journalists' work may be attributed to the general anxiety about the stability of their jobs. Most common fears include: losing employment and government intimidation. As many as 36 percent of journalists work without having a contract with their media outlet. Cases of direct pressure and illegal state intervention have been recorded in the form of unlawful office searches or administrative orders to close down activity. The majority of the surveyed journalists

⁴³ Survey "Mass Media in the Republic of Moldova: Access, Audiences, Preferences, Attitudes, in: *Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin* June 2002, p. 42.

⁴⁴ Journalists' access to information in the Republic of Moldova. Social survey. Edited by Vasile Spinei. Chisinau: - Acces Info, 2001.

⁴⁵ A survey carried out by the IMAS Marketing and Survey Institute, Chisinau between 14 and 28 November 2002, commissioned by the Independent Journalism Center. See: *Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin* December 2002, p. 27.

⁴⁶ Journalists' access to information in the Republic of Moldova. Social survey. Edited by Vasile Spinei. Chisinau: - Acces Info, 2001.

does not feel protected against persecution, threat or pressure as a result of their professional activity (60 percent "not at all", 35 percent "partially" and only 5 percent feels "fully protected.")⁴⁷

The problems cited in the context of the Republic of Moldova are incomparably more severe in Transnistria, which is a separate media market from that of the Republic of Moldova. The position of the media has been strongly influenced by the political evolution of the Republic of Transnistria. Transnistrian authorities were not able to monopolize the information market until 1995 as long as the commander of the Russian military on its territory, general Lebed, contested their activities in the army newspaper and TV station and had favorable hearing in the only major local paper *Dnestrovskaya Gazeta*. Following the victory of president Smirnov's candidate in the local elections and Lebed's departure to Moscow, an attack on the alternative media was launched. The army paper *Soldat Otechestva* cut down its circulation dramatically and the editor of the *Dnestrovskaya Gazeta* was dismissed by the Tiraspol city council.⁴⁸

The Transnistrian media scene became monopolized by the separatist authorities between 1995-1997. The government and its ally, the trade unions, set up their own newspapers while the dominant state-related capital group Sheriff launched a network for broadcasting 20 TV channels, mainly from Russia. In the situation when the only independent TV station, ARM-TV, stopped broadcasting in 2001 once the Russian government decided to discontinue funding, the authorities felt free to stop the information critical to the power group. The information blockade was particularly severe in the run-up to the presidential elections of December 2001. Foreign coverage critical to the government was taken off the air,⁴⁹ and the newspaper representing the contending Party of People's Power, *Glas Truda*, was boycotted by printing houses and its copies were confiscated on the border so that it had to discontinue. Attempts at closing down a successful independent newspaper, *Novaya Gazeta* (established in 1998), ranged from frequent thorough examinations of its accounts through unlawful confiscations (including searches of the premises) to attempts at closing the paper administratively. *Novaya Gazeta* has survived as the only independent socio-political newspaper circulated throughout Transnistria. There are no independent broadcast media, though.

3.4. Think tanks

There are only four think tanks in the country, all located in the capital of Chisinau, while there are none in the Transnistrian region.⁵⁰ They have been the most recent entrants onto the national

⁴⁷ A survey carried out by the IMAS Marketing and Survey Institute, Chisinau between 14 and 28 November 2002, commissioned by the Independent Journalism Center. See: Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin December 2002, p. 28.

⁴⁸ Andrei Safonov, "The Press in Transnistria," Mass Media in Moldova Analytical Bulletin December 2001, p. 12

⁴⁹ A case in point is the decision to block the broadcast of the Russian newsprogramme "Vesti" on channel RTR on 25 November 2001, which revealed involvement of the PMR authorities in arms trade and corruption, on two weeks before the presidential elections were to take place. In: Safonov, op. cit., p. 13.

⁵⁰ Institute for Public Policy, Association for Participatory Democracy ADEPT, Center for Strategic Studies and Reforms, Association Viitorul (Future).

NGO stage. Three of them were formally established between 1999 and 2001 as either spin-offs or policy centers of international organizations or networks. The core founding teams of all the think tanks had established informal ties as members of projects to such international agencies and programs as UNDP, the World Bank, TACIS or Open Society Institute in mid-1990s. Some of the project members had occupied prominent positions in the government or academia and were interested in maintaining influence on the government policy after they left the administration or state educational institutions due to political turbulences. Most experts continued working on projects involving close cooperation with the national government even in spite of lack of progress on substantive issues thanks to their personal idealist conviction of the general pro-European and pro-Western course of the governmental policy in late 1990s.

The initiative for the formalization of policy institutes into permanent organizations came from both the donors and the experts who agreed on a need for truly national sources of advice to the government, which would simultaneously be independent of the authorities. On the one hand, donors present in Moldova were considering creating spin-offs in the entire East European region, while the experts who had so far worked very closely with the government on development projects sought a greater distance from the authorities. These two pathways to independence can be observed in the origins of two major Moldovan think tanks. Institute of Public Policy was established from scratch in 2000 following a strategic decision by the Open Society Institute to emulate a successful strategy of creating its affiliated policy centers. Center for Strategic Studies and Reform was formed in 2001 out of a team of experts working for UNDP since 1997.

The agenda of the think tanks has been dependent on the priorities of the mother organizations as they remain essential sources of finance and institutional support in the early period of activity. In case of organizations built within a strong network, such as OSI, the priorities of the policy center (Institute for Public Policy), were laid down in an agreement between the network officials and the head of the center, who was drawn from the network itself. The Institute received a significant initial lump-sum grant and was designated as a member of the powerful international network. This form of establishment gave the Institute the economic stability and a position of independence from the government at the start, which were necessary for attracting a set of external experts of prominence who would decide on a long-term cooperation. The Institute's agenda was limited, however, to three areas which were in agreement with the regional priorities of the network and were deemed by the representatives of the local Soros Foundation to be the areas where greatest impact could be made on the government. In effect, issues of European integration, managing internal conflicts (the Transnistrian case) and educational reform have remained key elements of the think tank's program.

In this highly partisan political environment, think tanks' position between the mistrustful government, the increasingly distant international organizations and the weak civil society has been precarious. In the atmosphere of pervasive politicization of the public debate, the government attempted to label every independent think-tank as a tool of opposition or of foreign interests. The institutions were able to counter these allegations by adopting non-partisan, professional criteria for

the selection of project staff and by including ministry officials and experts into teams working on matters of state interest. In fact, cooperation in projects on foreign policy or internal and external security has developed over time so that one think tank leader (by no means sympathetic to the current government) could conclude that the Communist cabinet is according the European integration or conflict resolution in Transnistria a higher priority than its predecessors. For instance, Institute of Public Policy's European Integration programs have attracted the experts from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defense, Justice and the Border Guards. One way in which the government officials have been persuaded to be involved in sensitive projects was the guarantee of their anonymity in the produced publications. Also helpful was the fact that some research staff of the think tanks came from the ranks of ministries, and the personal ties between the ministry insiders and outsiders have been retained.

In general, the relations between think tanks and the Communist government remain nevertheless ambivalent. Once it was installed in spring 2001, the new parliament and government administration found itself in need of in-depth analysis on the issues on which it was elected: the European integration and the solution to the Transnistrian conflict. Instances include: the parliament's request for all available research on the Transnistrian situation, signing a memorandum of understanding with Ministry of Defense on policy advice for the civil control over the military and inclusion of a representative of a think tank in the newly-established National Commission for European Integration. At the same time, the government reacted sharply to criticisms of its policies in a heavy-handed manner. By issuing a joint critical statement on the centralizing tendencies and high budget costs of a local government reform, the members of a think-tank coalition became objects of internal investigation and even leaders of institutions in the Soros network were called to hearings.

4. Summary and Conclusions

Almost ten years of rapid decline following independency has set Moldova back in terms of social and economic development. Even today production is far away from the level of the year 1990. Although economically the period of independence has been very hard for Moldova, the country has made considerable efforts to reduce the omnipotence of the communist state and to define and implement basic functions of the democratic institutions. Significant progress has been achieved in preparation of the conditions for democracy. Moldova has made notable progress in the fields of the establishment of the rule of law and respect of human rights. Nevertheless, crucial problems in transforming public administration from a centralized bureaucracy into an efficient and performance-oriented organization still remain. The existing governance system still retains many features of the command style of management, which is inadequate for the market transformation, effectively hampering it. Political system is centralized in terms of decision-making, implementation and control.

Non-governmental organizations have been active in Moldova since 1989, but civil society started its today's formation as a result of radical reforms in economic and political areas only after the country became independent in 1991. Now the establishment of a *transitional* civil society is under way but this process is not smooth at all.

Youth is minimally interested in non-profit civic activity, which is not perceived as a prestigious enough component of their career. Activities of youth organizations of the Soviet type focus on sports events, art exhibitions and cultural performances. Associations, which emerged after 1992, have not helped to develop civic activism, either. Finally, organizations of both types do not represent the majority of the youth, which lives in rural areas, as they are located almost exclusively in Chisinau and other major cities. The most serious problems of youth movements in Moldova include: (i) a small number of the youth involved in setting up their own structures or activity and dominance of volunteer work, (ii) cynical, career-oriented, devoid of ideas character of youth party organizations, (iii) tendency by youth NGOs to stay clear of political debate and focus on electoral process, (iv) intimidation from the government and domination of older leaders in Transnistria, which keeps more daring ideas off the agenda.

Human rights remain to be a problem in Moldova and especially in Transnistria. However, the organizations working on the area of human rights protection are recording relatively small impact on the wider public because of (i) the general passivity and lack of confidence in influencing the authorities, and (ii) insecure position of the NGOs vis-a-vis the administration, which effectively limits the appeal of open criticism of human rights record of the government to the few professional organizations whose plight is closely monitored by their Western audience). Most of active NGOs conduct professional work in a narrow technical sense, maintaining small permanent staff and relying mainly on volunteers. Moreover, in Transnistria, where human rights problems are more acute it is not possible to register a non-governmental organization openly aimed at human rights protection.

Media market in Moldova is far from being free. Newspapers, due to the small size of the market, are highly dependent on sponsors or political parties and the number of copies is very limited. State-owned television and radio command virtual monopoly on the news provision to the population. The Communist government and public authorities take active part in distorting the contents of information (independent news can contest the state broadcast and news only in the urban areas). Journalists are uncertain about the stability of their jobs. Most of them do not feel protected against persecution, threat or pressure as a result of their professional activity. Situation in Transnistria, which has a separate media market from that of the Republic of Moldova, is much more difficult. The position of the media is strongly influenced by the local Communist regime. Media market is monopolized by the separatist authorities. Independent broadcast media do not exist in Transnistria, either.

There are only four think tanks in the country. All of them are located in Chisinau - the capital of Moldova. Until the date no think tanks have been established in Transnistria. The existing think tanks are rather weak and most of them work for/with international organizations which are present

in Moldova (UNDP, the World Bank etc.). On the other hand, experience of other countries in transition shows that very soon one can expect of significant growth of organizations of this type and improvement of the quality of the services provided.

To summarize, although several data and patterns observed indicate progress in the development of non-governmental sector in Moldova, there is a number of sensitive issues (e.g., freedom of media or human rights protection) where certain regress has been observed in last two years. Moreover, the situation of the non-governmental sector in Transnistria is far from being satisfactory.

Finally, we have to note that the critical socio-economic condition of the country seems to be the main threat to democracy and the rule of law in Moldova. This is because a further significant economic decline can provide fertile ground not only for the Communist party, as it was demonstrated in the last election, but for more non-democratic political forces and extremists. Economic collapse could jeopardize the achievements in the area of democratization and civil society development. Thus, it needs to be recognized that only effects of a successful economic reform process may reverse undesirable patterns in the area of economic development, and change the socio-economic situation of Moldova, increase income of population, reduce poverty, guarantee stability and irreversibility of Moldovan achievements in democratization and the development of civil society.

References

- Carasciuc L. (2001) Corruption and Quality of Governance: The Case of Moldova. Transparency International- Moldova, Chisinau
- Catalogue of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Republic of Moldova 2002, Chisinau: Editura Arc/CONTACT 2003.
- Current Problems of the Media in Moldova, In "Mass Media in Moldova: Analytical Bulletin", Chisinau: International Journalism Centre, 2002.
- Gorelova E. (2003) Economic aspects and the effects of labour force migration. In Loghin I., and Strutzescu P. (Eds.) "Aspects of labour force migration in the context of Republic of Moldova. Considerations of European and Moldovan experts", Chisinau: LADOM, 2003.
- Human Development Report 2002. UNDP, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002
- Human Rights Violations in the Republic of Moldova. Chisinau: LADOM, 2002.
- Mass-Media and Legislation: Analysis. Opinions. Proposals. Universul, Chisinau, 2003.
- Moldova. Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Prepared by the Moldovan authorities, April 21, 2002
- Moldova 2002. Challenges for Development. Policy Analysis Center, USAID Fiscal Reform Project, Chisinau, 2002
- Mosneaga V., Munteanu V. (2003) Republic of Moldova: Labour force migration and the practice of state regulation. In Loghin I., and Strutzescu P. (Eds.) "Aspects of labour force migration in the context of Republic of Moldova. Considerations of European and Moldovan experts", Chisinau: LADOM, 2003.
- Nemtsanu I., "Protecting human rights is the work of human beings themselves", *Vremya*, p. 5, 21.01.2001 (in Russian)
- Poverty Reduction, Growth and Debt Sustainability in Low-Income CIS Countries. IMF, World Bank, February 4, 2002
- Republic of Moldova. Staff Report for the 2002 Article IV Consultation, First Review Under the Three-Year Arrangement Under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and Request for Waiver of Performance Criteria, IMF, June 26, 2002
- Ronnas P. and Orlova N. (2000) Moldova's Transition to Destitution. Sida studies No.1. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Stockholm 2000
- Study on the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Republic of Moldova. Chisinau: Editura Arc, 2002

Annex

Table 1. The Republic of Moldova – Country Profile

| | 1997 | 2000 | 2001 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| People | | | |
| Population, total | 4.3 million | 4.3 million | 4.3 million |
| Population growth (annual %) | -0.3 | -0.2 | -0.4 |
| National poverty rate (% of population) | 23.3 | .. | .. |
| Life expectancy (years) | 66.5 | 67.5 | 67.2 |
| Fertility rate (births per woman) | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) | 28.2 | 27.0 | 27.0 |
| Under 5 mortality rate (per 1,000 children) | .. | 33.0 | 32.0 |
| Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total) | 99.1 | .. | .. |
| Child immunization, measles (% of under 12 mos) | 99.0 | 87.0 | 81.0 |
| Prevalence of HIV (female, % ages 15-24) | .. | .. | 0.1 |
| Illiteracy total (% age 15 and above) | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Illiteracy female (% of age 15 and above) | 2.3 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| Primary completion rate, total (% age group) | .. | .. | .. |
| Primary completion rate, female (% age group) | .. | .. | .. |
| Net primary enrollment (% relevant age group) | .. | 78.4 | .. |
| Net secondary enrollment (% relevant age group) | .. | 68.2 | .. |
| Environment | | | |
| Surface area (sq. km) | 33,850.0 | 33,850.0 | 33,850.0 |
| Forests (1,000 sq. km) | .. | 3,250.0 | .. |
| Deforestation (average annual % 1990-2000) | .. | -0.2 | .. |
| Water use (% of total resources) | .. | 2,735.0 | .. |
| CO2 emissions (metric tons per capita) | 2.5 | .. | .. |
| Access to improved water source (% of total pop.) | .. | 92.0 | .. |
| Access to improved sanitation (% of urban pop.) | .. | 100.0 | .. |
| Energy use per capita (kg of oil equivalent) | 1,057.7 | 671.1 | .. |
| Electricity use per capita (kWh) | 1,217.3 | 720.0 | .. |

| Economy | | | |
|--|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| GNI, Atlas method (current US\$) | 2.2 billion | 1.4 billion | 1.5 billion |
| GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$) | 590.0 | 400.0 | 400.0 |
| GDP (current \$) | 1.9 billion | 1.3 billion | 1.5 billion |
| GDP growth (annual %) | 1.6 | 2.1 | 6.1 |
| GDP implicit price deflator (annual % growth) | 12.5 | 27.3 | 11.9 |
| Value added in agriculture (% of GDP) | 30.2 | 29.0 | 26.0 |
| Value added in industry (% of GDP) | 29.0 | 21.7 | 24.1 |
| Value added in services (% of GDP) | 40.8 | 49.2 | 49.8 |
| Exports of goods and services (% of GDP) | 54.8 | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| Imports of goods and services (% of GDP) | 74.3 | 75.4 | 74.4 |
| Gross capital formation (% of GDP) | 23.8 | 23.9 | 20.0 |
| Current revenue, excluding grants (% of GDP) | 29.4 | 24.5 | 21.3 |
| Overall budget balance, including grants (% of GDP) | -7.6 | -1.3 | 1.1 |
| Technology and infrastructure | | | |
| Fixed lines and mobile telephones (per 1,000 people) | 144.5 | 165.0 | 201.8 |
| Telephone average cost of local call (US\$ per three minutes) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Personal computers (per 1,000 people) | 3.9 | 14.5 | 15.9 |
| Internet users | 1,200.0 | 52,600.0 | 60,000.0 |
| Paved roads (% of total) | 86.9 | .. | .. |
| Aircraft departures | 1,600.0 | 3,700.0 | 3,900.0 |
| Trade and finance | | | |
| Trade in goods as a share of GDP (%) | 106.0 | 96.6 | 99.1 |
| Trade in goods as a share of goods GDP (%) | 163.1 | 177.1 | .. |
| High-technology exports (% of manufactured exports) | 22.5 | 3.3 | 2.6 |
| Foreign direct investment, net inflows in reporting country (current US\$) | 78.7 million | 142.8 million | 93.5 million |
| Present value of debt (current US\$) | 0.0 | 1.1 billion | 1.1 billion |
| Total debt service (% of exports of goods and services) | 11.2 | 16.8 | 19.4 |
| Short-term debt outstanding (current US\$) | 4.0 million | 27.6 million | 21.5 million |
| Aid per capita (current US\$) | 15.1 | 28.7 | 27.9 |

Source: World Development Indicators database, April 2003

Table 2. Moldovan elections, 1989 –2003

| 1991 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Mircea Snegur (sole candidate) | | 98.17% |
| 1994 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS | | |
| | Votes (%) | Seats |
| Agrarian Democratic Party | 43.2 | 54 (56?) |
| Socialist Unity Bloc and „Jedinstvo Movement | 22.0 | 27(28) |
| Block of Peasants and Intellectuals | 9.2 | 11 |
| Christian Democratic Popular Front | 7.5 | 9 |
| 1995 LOCAL ELECTIONS | | |
| | Votes (%) | |
| Agrarian Democratic Party | 47.0 | 64.8 |
| Aliance of Democratic Forces | 19.7 | 10.3 |
| Party of Communists | 15.7 | 5.3 |
| Socialist Unity Bloc | 7.2 | 1.6 |
| Social Democratic Party | 2.3 | 2.6 |
| 1996 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS | | |
| | 1st round (%) | 2nd round (%) |
| Petru Lucinschi | 27.7 | 54.0 |
| Mircea Snegur | 38.8 | 46.0 |
| Vladimir Voronin | 10.2 | |
| Andrei Sangheli | 9.5 | |
| Valeriu Matei | 8.9 | |
| 1998 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS | | |
| | Votes (%) | Seats |
| Party of Communists | 30.1 | 40 |
| Democratic Convention | 19.4 | 26 |
| Movement for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova | 18.1 | 24 |
| Party of Democratic Forces | 8.8 | 11 |
| 1999 LOCAL ELECTIONS | | |
| | Votes for councils Votes (%) | Majors (%) |
| Party of Communists+Agrarians+ Socialists | 32.1 | 22.8 |
| Centrist Alliance of Moldova | 18.5 | 14.8 |
| Democratic Convention of Moldova | 12.8 | 11.9 |
| Party of Democratic Forces | 8.19 | 7.73 |
| Christian Democratic Popular Front | 6.2 | 4.8 |

| 2001 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | Votes (%) | Seats |
| The Communist Party of Moldova | 50.1 | 71 |
| Braghis Alliance | 13.4 | 19 |
| Christian Democratic People's Party | 8.2 | 11 |
| | | |
| 2003 LOCAL ELECTIONS | | |
| | Votes for councils Votes (%) (%) | |
| The Communist Party of Moldova | 44.8 | |
| Our Moldova | 20.2 | |
| Democratic Party | 7.7 | |
| Independent candidates | 5.5 | |
| Block „SDP-SLP” | 4.5 | |

List of interviews

Individual Interviews

1. Barbarosie Arcadie, Institute for Public Policy (also Chairman of Soros Foundation Moldova) (19.06.2003, 14.00-15.00)
2. Botan Igor, Association for Participatory Democracy ADEPT (16.06.2003, 12.30-14.30)
3. Brigidin Andrey, League for Defence of Human Rights in Moldova (14.06.2006, 12.30-15.00)
4. Cibotaru Viorel, Institute for Public Policy (19.06.2003, 17.00-18.30)
5. Coadă Claudia, European Youth Exchange Moldova (20.06.2003, 13.00-15.00)
6. Godea Mihai, CONTACT (17.06.2003, 10.00-13.00)
7. Gudim Anatol, Center for Strategic Studies and Reforms (17.06.2003, 14.00-16.00)
8. Moldovanu Iosif, European Youth Exchange Moldova (1998-2002, President of National Youth Council) (20.06.2003, 13.00-15.00)
9. Muraru Victor, Professor, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, State University of Moldova (19.06.2003, 16.00-17.00)
10. Niculita Aliona, CONTACT (17.06.2003, 10.00-13.00; 20.06.2003, 15.00-16.00)
11. Prebinos Mihail, Association of Mayors and Local Communities of the Republic of Moldova (16.06.2003, 15.00-19.00)
12. Tomsa Sergiu, European Youth Exchange Moldova (20.06.2003, 13.00-15.00)
13. Trembitska Julia, Member of The Society for Overall Development of Children (15.06.2003, 18.00-23.00)
14. Trombitsky Ilya, Ecological Society "Biotica" (former member of Parliament, author of the Law on Non-governmental Organizations in Moldova) (15.06.2003, 18.00-23.00)
15. Uritu Stefan, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Moldova (16.06.2003, 10.00-12.00)
16. Ursu Viorel, Civil Society Program Director, Soros Foundation Moldova (19.06.2003, 15.00-16.00)

Roundtable (18.06.2003, 13.00-15.00, Tiraspol, Transnistria)

17. Abramova Juliana, World Window
18. Alistratova Oksana, Interaction
19. Behselets Vyacheslav, Common Home
20. Belova Svetlana, Every Child
21. Gavrishlev Dmitry, Common Home
22. Peshevich Svetlana, Interaction
23. Sorochan Alexandr, World Window