

Meeting notes: IGLO OPEN on the topic of Moldova's Experience in Horizon Europe

Datum:	8.10.2025
Místo konání akce:	Rue Belliard 41-43, Brussels 1040
Zapsala:	Monika Čechmanová, junior consultant for research

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Welcome remarks

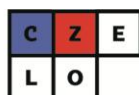
Mina Stareva. Deputy Head of the Unit, International cooperation – Europe and Americas, DG RTD

- The event was organized at a timely moment, following the recent elections in Moldova, with a focus on the country's participation in the current Horizon Europe program.
- Moldova has a long-standing tradition of participation, starting in 2012, and already gained considerable experience. The discussion focused on lessons learned, good practices, challenges, and what comes next regarding the next framework program.
- A big merit goes to the Horizon Europe office in Moldova and to the network of NCPs. The European Commission will continue supporting the Horizon Europe office in Moldova for the upcoming three years.
- At the same time, some structural challenges remain, including limited cooperation between science and business (e.g. low participation in Pillar 3 of HEU).
- In July, a new proposal on FP10 was introduced together with the proposal for the next MFF. The European Commission appears satisfied with the proposal, and the budget is almost doubled.

Moldova's Impact in Horizon Europe

Doinița ULINICI, Head of the Moldovan Office for Science and Technology (MOST)

- MOST is part of the National agency for research and development (NARD)
 - Structure – 3 key areas – Research project department, Innovative project department, international cooperation department (covering mainly bilateral cooperation)
- Moldova is fully associated to Horizon Europe, as the first country from the Eastern Partnership to achieve this status. The country has so far recorded 73 project participations, with 336 eligible proposals and 428 submitted, securing over €10.15 million in Horizon Europe funding.
- Very low investment in research, under 0.5% GDP, which is why Moldova views HEU as a strategic opportunity to access funding and additional support.
- Challenge: the research community in Moldova is aging and continues to face challenges related to brain drain.
- A number of reforms are underway to align national legislation with EU standards, including reforms of the research and innovation system.
- Horizon Europe Project M-Hero
 - Budget - 943 750 euros
 - From September 2025 till August 2028
 - The project aims to:
 - Strengthen the Horizon Europe Office (HEO) in Moldova
 - Develop the national network of NCPs



- Establish a sustainable and high-quality support system for the scientific community
- Provide enhanced opportunities for participation in Horizon Europe

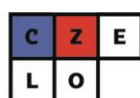
Success Stories from Moldovan Institutions in Horizon Europe

Irina Nicorici, Thematic Coordinator, Pillar I: Excellent science, Horizon Europe Office Moldova

- Moldova's participation in Pillar I
 - 2014-2025 – about 100 applications – around 30 grants
 - According to Dashboard data, Moldova is still lagging in the ERC component, as none of the submitted projects have been granted so far. The MSCA is very successful, with the Staff Exchanges scheme performing particularly well (12 MSCA grants signed in total with more than 2 mill eur). Funded projects are of high quality, and it is often NGOs rather than universities that lead to successful applications.
 - Focus topics on governance, employment, engineering, chemistry
 - Research infrastructures are quite successful (12 successful)
 - 2-3 grants signed withing Pillar 1 per year
 - Success story:
 - NGO Gender Centru – gender balance
 - ORCA – period 2024–2028, 184 000 eur, coordinated by Latvia
 - FEMENA – period 2026–2030, 160 320 eur, coordinated by Ireland
 - PRELAB – period 2024–2028, 184 000 eur, coordinated by Latvia
 - Precarious Labor in Asia: Exploring Challenges and Solutions to Labor Insecurity through Case-Study-Based Evidence from 8 Asian Countries
 - Start March 24' and end February 28'
 - European participants (Albania, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Moldova, Romania)
 - Partnering organizations (Indonesia, Laos, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka)
 - Main activities
 - Train researchers to measure informality
 - Adapt methodologies
 - Foster dialogue

Nicu Vrabie. Thematic Coordinator, Pillar II: Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, Horizon Europe Office Moldova

- From Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe – Moldova's performance
 - Comparison of 2014-2020 Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe 2021-2027
 - Under Horizon 2020, Moldova secured EUR 7.15 mill, with 69 signed grants and a 14.55% success rate
- Pillar II
 - Overall value of all projects with Moldovan participation in HEU – 8,89 mill eur
 - Funding directly received by Moldovan entities from the EU – 6,39 mill eur
 - 51 officially awarded and signed projects in Pillar 2
 - 55 Moldovan organizations in Horizon Europe projects
 - Main thematic domains include law enforcement, civil society, and counterterrorism



- Participating institutions include the National Agency for Research and Development (top 5), as well as several private companies
- Success story:
 - Reliable biometric technologies to assist Police authorities in combating terrorism and organized crime – start January 2023 and end December 2025
 - Consortium – 20 partners from 15 countries

Elena Simciuc, Thematic Coordinator, Widening participation and spreading excellence, Horizon Europe Office Moldova

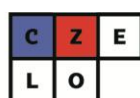
- Type of organizations
 - 8.9% - Private for-profit entities (excluding Higher or Secondary Education establishments)
 - 9.8% - Public bodies (excluding Research Organizations and Secondary or Higher Education)
 - 10.9% - Others
 - 19.8% - Research Organizations
 - 50.6% - Higher or Secondary Education Establishments
- Top participants
 - National agency for Research and Development
 - Technical University of Moldova
 - Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Republic of Moldova
 - Academy of Sciences of Moldova
- Success story:
 - WaterWise Hub – Center of Excellence in Water and Circular Economy
 - Aims to establish an action-oriented Center of Excellence in Water and Circular Economy, acting as a catalyst for research, innovation, business development, and knowledge dissemination across widening countries
 - Topic – Widening Participation and Strengthening the European Research Area (WIDERA)
 - Start date 2025 and end date 2028
 - Led by Technical University of Moldova (UTM)
 - Target groups – Academia, Business, Public sector and Civil society
 - Main results:
 - WaterWise R&I strategy
 - Action and investment plan
 - WaterWise FundFinder portal
 - Decision Support Toolkit
 - Training and Curriculum
 - Knowledge Center and Mentoring Scheme

Discussion – Building on success: Moldova as partner in R&I

Speakers: Marie-Kristin Komendzinski (DG RTD), Christoph Castex (REA), Mykhailo Hrebenuk (Guard)

Q: What is the role and potential of Moldova as research and innovation actor?

A: Noted that it is a very timely moment to observe Moldova's progress in Horizon Europe. Several success stories have already been shared. When working with Moldova, Horizon Europe can build on



a long-standing experience dating back to 2012, spanning three different framework programs. So far, the highest potential has been seen under Horizon Europe. Representative from the EC highlighted the new project that will further support the Horizon Europe Office in Moldova as a key opportunity for future collaborations.

Q: Moldova's progress in the field of security-related projects.

- 27 projects from Moldova related to the security topics.
- A: Introduced the "Civil Security for Society" Work program 2025
- "Civil Security for Society" Work program 2025
 - Effective management of EU borders - Relevance of Moldova in the BM area – 28 mill eur
 - Fighting Crime and terrorism – Relevance of Moldova in the FCT area – 43,5 mill euro
 - Resilient infrastructure – 22 mill euro
 - Disaster resilient societies – 41 mill euro
 - Strengthening security R&I – 21,5 mill euro
- Project example – EMERITUS
 - Given Moldova's specific geopolitical context and its border with Ukraine, the country brings unique experience with for example border controls that can be beneficial for the EU MS.

Q: What is your experience with Moldovan partners, and what advice would you give to those seeking more cooperation?

A: For the Associated Countries to the HEU program it is important to go the "extra mile" to reach a deeper level of integration with EU Member States. For associated countries, building close links based on what they can specifically offer to Member States is crucial. Similar to Ukraine, Moldova should look carefully at its diaspora and explore how to transform it into a networking advantage. When talking to UA stakeholders, many mention that they do not know potential partners and focus mainly on research. We encourage them to check whether they might have existing links through other programs such as Erasmus+ or other institutional contacts.

Q: What do EU partners gain from cooperating with Eastern European countries?

A: The key point is to remind EU partners that the region may lack a long research legacy in the framework programs, but this is not due to a lack of excellent research. It will take time for these countries to reach the same level of integration as their "Western counterparts", but there remains significant, still-hidden potential.

