



COVID-19 Response and Recovery Monthly Bulletin

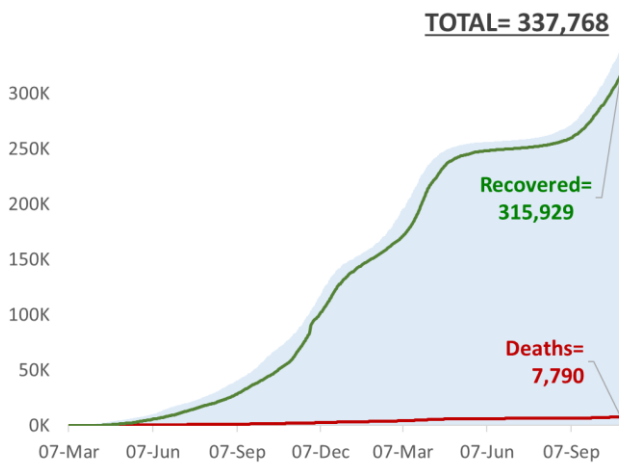
October 2021



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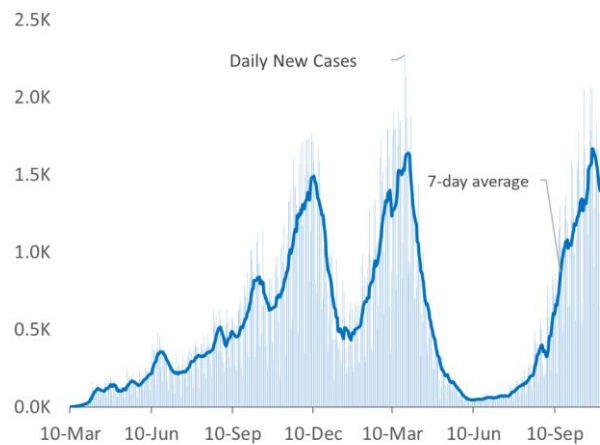
1 COVID-19 Epi and Health situation update (data as of 31 October unless stated otherwise)

Total Cases, Recoveries and Deaths



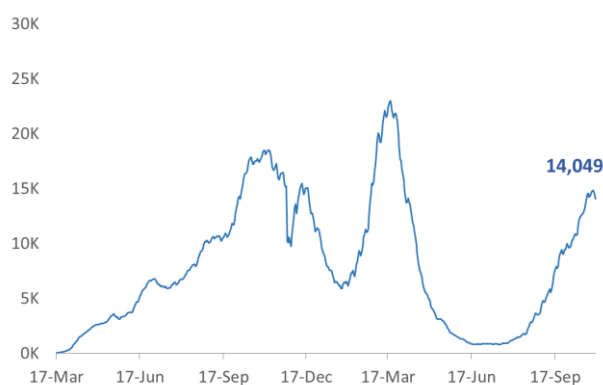
The total number of COVID-19 cases in the country has continued to increase and reached 337,768 at the end of October.

New Infections



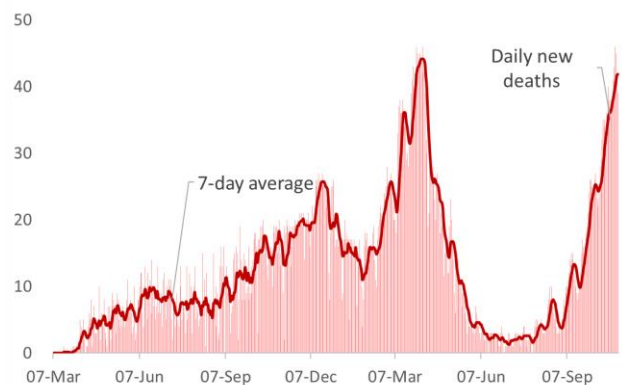
The 7-day average number of daily new cases was 1,395 at the end of October, which marks a 24% increase compared to the beginning of the month.

Active Cases



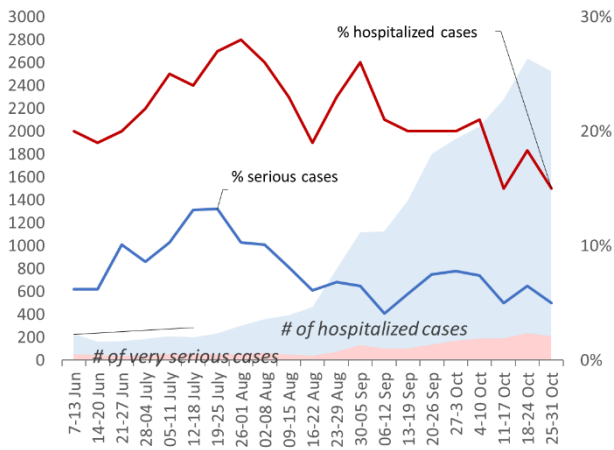
The number of active cases steadily increased over the past month and peaked at 14,834 on October 29. Since then, the number of active cases has slightly decreased and now stands at 14,049.

New Deaths



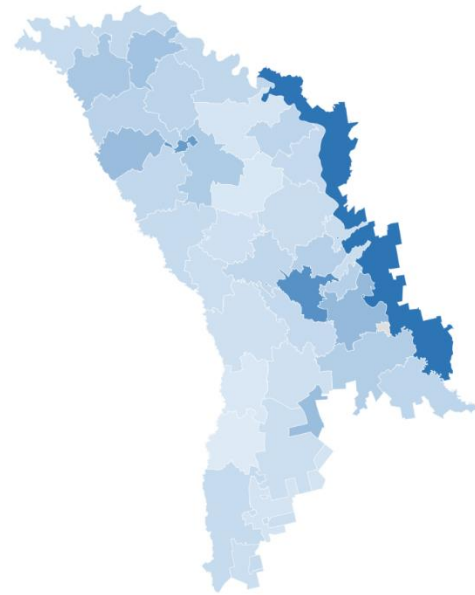
The 7-day average number of deaths has more than doubled over the course of October and, as of the end of the month it stands at 41.9. The total number of deaths currently is 7,790.

Serious, Very Serious and Hospitalized Cases (weekly averages)



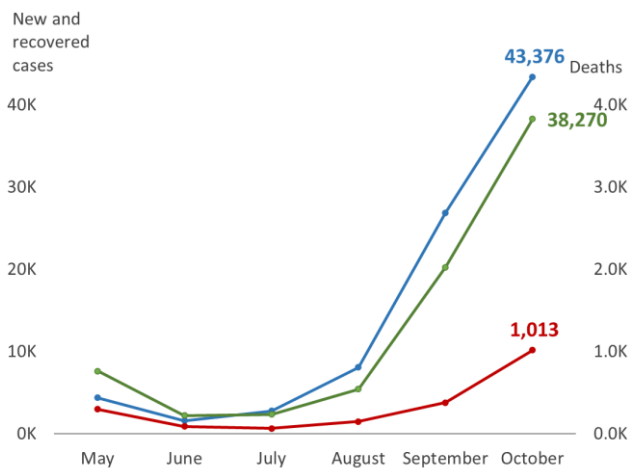
The average daily number of very serious cases increased substantially in October (201) compared to the previous month (123). The 7-day average daily number of very serious cases reached 209 in the week of October 25-31. The total number of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 currently stands at 2,124 of whom 157 are in a very serious condition.

14-Day Incidence per 100,000 by District



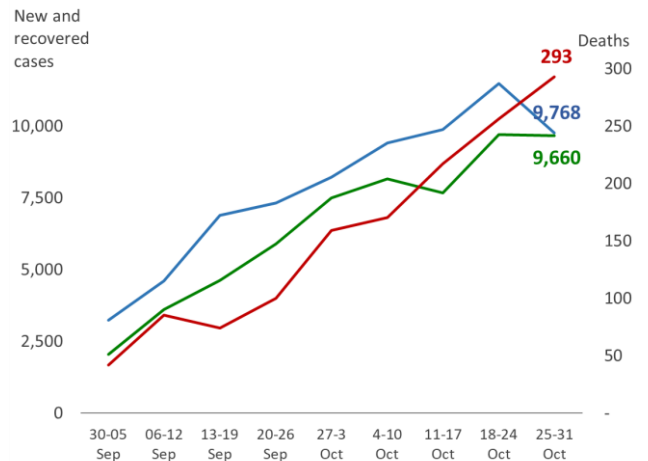
The crude cumulative incidence rate per 100,000 in the last 14 days is 611. The incidence has been highest in the Transnistria Region (1,189), Chisinau (958) and Singerei (869). The lowest incidence has been recorded in Cantemir (215).

Monthly Data: New Cases, Recoveries and Deaths



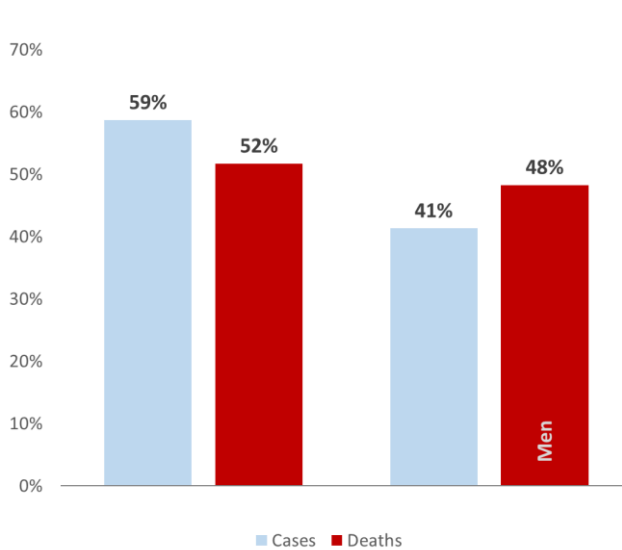
Overall, the number of new cases in October increased by 61% compared to the previous month and reached 43,376. The crude cumulative incidence of cases per 100,000 population for the last 30 days was 1,212 on October 31. The number of deaths increased by 169% during the past month. The monthly number of recoveries also reflected the increase in cases and rose by 89%.

Weekly Data: New Cases, Recoveries and Deaths



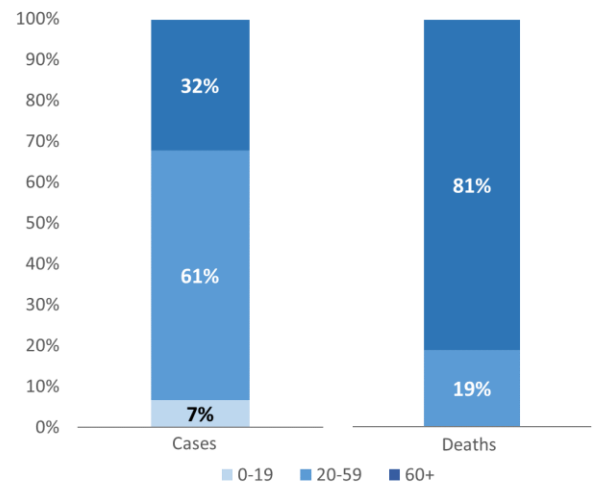
The number of weekly cases has increased over the course of the past month, reaching a peak of 11,471 for the week of October 18-24. Since then, this number has decreased by 14.8% and stood at 9,768 for the week of October 25-31. The crude cumulative incidence of cases per 100,000 population for the last 7 days was 281. Moreover, the number of deaths has increased by 14.5%, while the number of recoveries has remained relatively constant (-0.3%).

Cases and Deaths by Sex



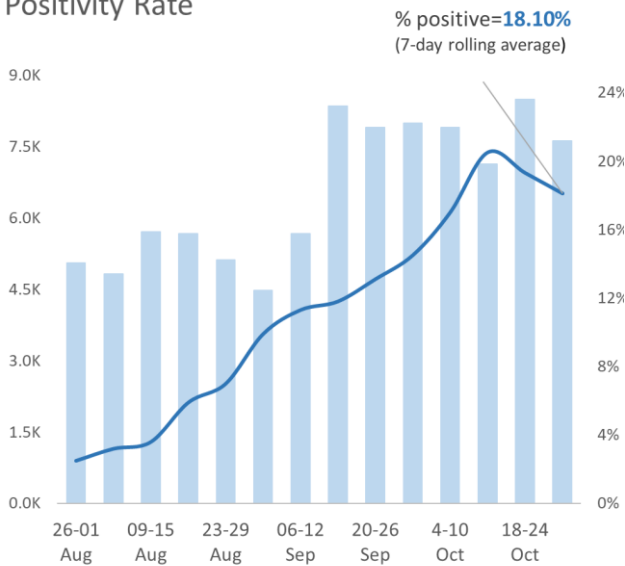
Overall, 59% of all cases have been recorded among women and 41% among men. Moreover, women (52%) account for a slightly higher proportion of all deaths than men (48%).

COVID-19 Cases/Deaths by Age Group



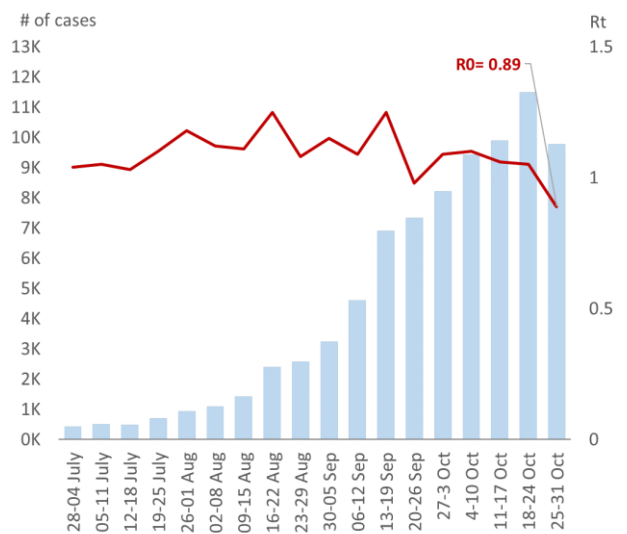
Even though infections among people aged 60 and over accounted for 32% of the total number of cases, 81% of all deaths were registered in this age group. The average age of patients who have died from the disease is 68.1.

Average Daily Tests and Positivity Rate



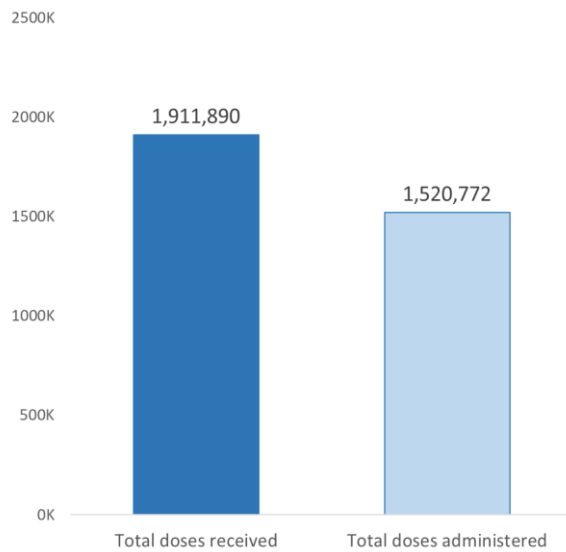
Overall, the percentage of positive tests continued to increase over the course of the month and peaked at 20.5% between Oct 11-17. Since then, the figure has decreased slightly and as of October 31, it stands at 18.1%. On average, 7,620 tests were conducted every day during the week of October 25-31.

COVID-19 Weekly Cases and Effective Reproductive Number (Rt)



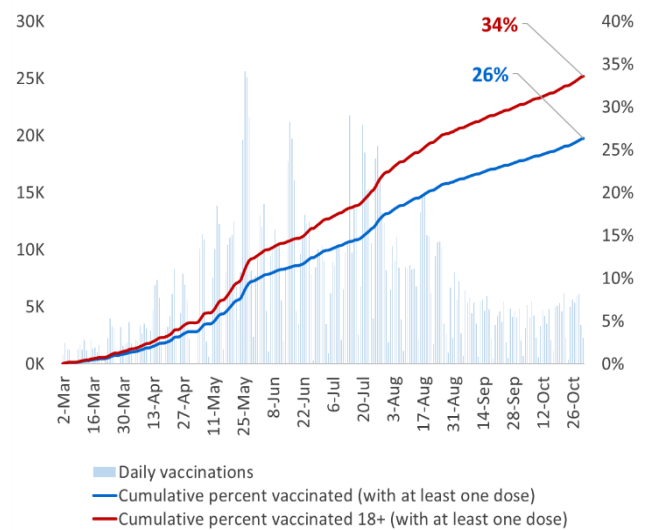
The effective reproductive number has remained above 1 through most of October but decreased to 0.89 during the last week of the month. This represents a 15% decrease compared to the previous week and an 18% decrease compared to the beginning of the month.

Received and administered vaccines



As of October 31, a total of 1,911,890 COVID-19 vaccines have been received by the country, out of which 1,520,772 or 80% have been administered, with over 390,000 doses still being available for use.

Daily Vaccinations and Percentage Vaccinated



The number of vaccinations administered in October was 118,539 marking a 5.8% decrease compared to the previous month. As of October 31, an estimated 26% of the country's population or 34% of the population aged 18+ has received at least one vaccine dose.

1.1 Official decision and restrictions

- The latest Decision of the CNESP, [No. 64 from 26 Oct. 2021](#) institutes a series of restrictions, as follows:
 - The state of emergency in public health is extended through November 30, 2021 inclusive, on the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova
 - Organization of private events (weddings, receptions etc.) is organized with a max of 50 pers. inside and 100 pers. outside ensuring 2 sq.m. of space per person and starting with November 8th, all private events will be banned.
 - The vacation for all students is prolonged through November 8th in all territorial units with Red Code alert level.
 - Admission to all visitors and beneficiaries to social and medical institutions is possible only upon a negative test, PCR or antigen, regardless of the vaccination status
- The Medicines and Medical Devices Agency [announced](#) it gives green light to vaccination of 12-year-old children with Pfizer vaccine starting with October 25.

2 General situation update

2.1 Political update & Transnistria region

- The energy crisis has revealed again the country's dependence on energetic resources, the insufficient infrastructure to interconnect with other vendors and to store natural gas, options being extremely limited. After the previous contract with Gazprom which expired in September the Government was looking for options to compensate the gap, as the Russian vendor has significantly reduced the delivered volumes till a new agreement will be achieved. The task was difficult as the newly proposed quotations by Gazprom were three times higher compared to the previous, due to the international markets prices which skyrocketed in the last few weeks. Since the crisis has been deployed, the Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development, together with other members of the cabinet made significant efforts to identify alternative

solutions. The achieved agreements with the Polish, Romanian, Ukrainian gas producers and delivering companies were meant to cover only part of the huge gap of required volumes. The European Union commission came with financial support to overcome the crisis, but none of the identified solutions were sufficient. Finally, the negotiation process with Gazprom has successfully ended on 29 of October, when previous contract was extended by five years using a price formula proposed by the Moldovan party, with supplies to start under the new contract on November 1. For November the price of gas will be US\$450 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas. Later the price shall adjust according to the quotations on stock exchanges.

- The Government has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence known as the Istanbul Convention. The Convention was adopted by the Council of Europe back in 2011 and Moldova signed it in 2017, but its ratification was postponed several times.
- The General Prosecutor was suspended and placed under home arrest for the period of the investigation while legal actions were taken against him. Meanwhile, the deputies of General Prosecutor have resigned and on 6 October the Superior Council of Prosecutors has appointed Dumitru Robu as the acting Prosecutor General.
- The European Commission has disbursed €50 million in macro-financial assistance to Moldova, this disbursement is part of the €3 billion emergency package for the enlargement and neighborhood partners, to help them respond to the economic impact of the pandemic.
- Negotiations between the IMF mission and the Moldovan Government have successfully ended with a staff-level agreement for Moldova to access 564 M USD. The programme will be implemented in a time span of 40 months and is subject to the implementation of several prior actions, including on central bank independence, the correction of past policy slippages, and the adoption of credible fiscal plans. Also, Moldova will use the Special Drawing Rights of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to finance the state budget's needs, with about US\$236 million to be allocated to finance the necessities of Moldova's state budget.
- The World Bank will provide Moldova with additional financing worth €24.8 million as loan aiming to implement national-wide project on immunization against COVID-19.
- The Central Electoral Commission has approved the results of the elections to the People's Assembly of Gagauzia and the 35 mandates of deputies. The Assembly consists now of 25 independent MPs, 9 deputies from the Bloc of Communists and Socialists (BECS), and 1 deputy from the party "Building Europe at Home" (PACE). Out of 35 deputies, only two are women.

Transnistria region

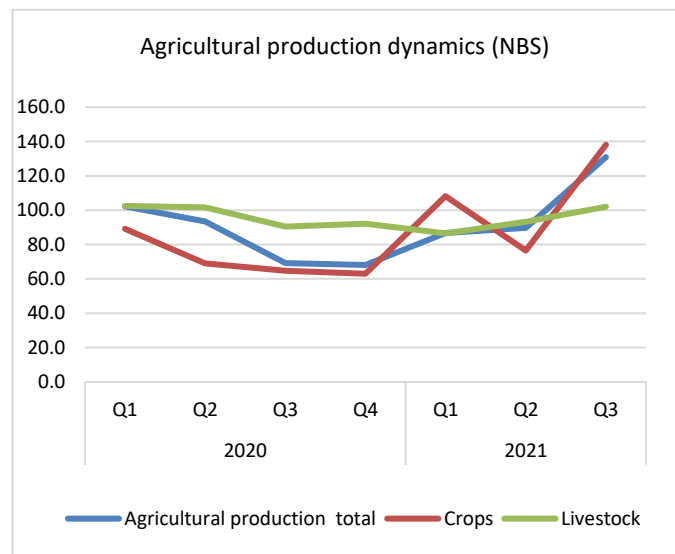
- Chief negotiators from Chisinau and Tiraspol continued the dialogue on the issue of neutral numbers. The sides have discussed the ways on which commercial vehicles and ambulances from the left bank can cross the Ukrainian border.

2.2 Economic and social update

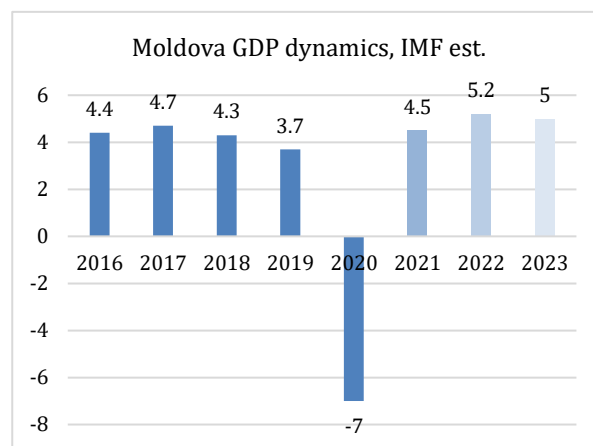
- The *annual inflation in September* continued its upward trend reaching 6.68% above the NBM target (5%). This hike in inflation rate was driven by the consumers price increase for both, food (8.3%) and non-food (8.6%) products in the context of growing prices for services (1.5%). In September 2021, the prices for all core food items like vegetables (+19.6%) except root vegetables, eggs (+4%), dairy (+1.7%), bakery (+1.6%), meat products (+1.5%) and honey (+1.3%) went up compared to previous month, but also the non-foods price increase for liquified gas (+8%), coal (+6%) and gasoline (+3%) was substantial. In the same period, the biggest hike in prices for services provided to population was observed for dental care (+8%), accommodation (8.6%) and air transportation (2.5%). Producers' prices increased by 7.8% in September

2021 versus the same period of last year triggered by higher prices in manufacturing sector. Recent energy price spikes are likely to further spur inflationary risks in the near term.

- Global agricultural production* in January–September 2021 grew by 20.5% compared to last year primarily due to favourable weather conditions that turned into 34.5% increase in crops production. Notably, cereals and beans production exceeded by more than twice last year crops harvest. On contrary, livestock production declined by 4.7% versus same period in 2020. The highest drop was in dairy production (-9.9%), livestock and poultry production (-3.4%) and eggs (-1.8%). *The industry* showed vivid signs of recovery registering 12.8% growth during January–August 2021 versus same period of 2020 the rate of growth of which outperformed the pre-covid period (6.6%). This progress is due to growth in extractives (+7.1%), manufacturing (+9.3%) and energy and gas supply sector (+14.3%). Noteworthy that in August 2021 pharmaceuticals and furniture productions went up by over 50%, while food processing increased by only 16% versus same period of 2020. However, the challenges related to natural gas supply and energy prices increase may slow down these positive dynamics.
- Moldova's exports* slowed down in August versus July 2021, however, are still substantially higher than in the same period of 2020. Overall, during January–August 2021 exports increased by 18.6% versus the same period of 2020. Noteworthy that while exports of domestically produced goods and services grew by slightly over 14%, re-exports increased by roughly one third. The EU remains the main destination for Moldovan goods accounting for 62.5% of total exports. In terms of exports structure, Romania remains key trade partner (27.4%) followed by Germany and Russia (9.3% accordingly), Turkey (9%), Italy (7.7%) and Poland (3.7%), whereas the first three countries substantially ramped up imports from Moldova in 2021. The main export items are machinery and equipment for transportation (23.6%) that increased its exports in January–August 2021, followed by manufactured products (21.3%), agri-food and livestock (20.5%). Noteworthy the decline in exports of traditional items as fruits and vegetables (by 13.2%), oils (by 35.5%), animal foods (by 34.4%), organic chemicals (by 33.6%), livestock (by 15.3%), sugar and honey (by 14.2%). While imports from the EU grew by over one third, the imports from CIS declined by 1.4%. The top countries from which Moldova importing goods are Romania (12.4%), Russia (12.2%), China (11.7%), Ukraine (9.3%), Germany (8.1%), Turkey (7.1%). Machinery and equipment for transport are the main import items (25.6%) followed by the manufactured goods (19%), chemicals (15.2%) and mineral fuels (12.5%). As the imports substantially exceeded exports in January–August 2021, the trade balance deficit widened by 44% compared to 2020.
- Economic recovery since the beginning of this year spurred production pushing the demand for energy and fuel inputs, particularly in China, which outstripped the supply. Europe topped up on the demand pressures ahead of winter season having exhausted its natural gas reserves during last winter, while the green energy did not meet the rising demands in full. The European producers of natural gas have been shrinking their traditional production facilities shifting towards renewable and green energy sources. Russia being the key biggest natural gas supplier in Europe did not increase gas extraction due to several reasons ranging from temporary limited internal capacity to extract more quantities due to recent fire accident on one of its extraction plants to the tactical decision to fill in its internal reserves and to promote nord stream-2 supply network. In this context, the energy prices soared up producing inflationary effects. The European market gas prices more than doubled in October, oil prices went also up.



- Moldova was affected by the high prices as its energy dependency is high. Almost 70% of the primary energy supply comes from imports. The residential sector is the largest energy user, with a 40 per cent share of national energy consumption. As the gas supply contract ended in October and amidst the new contract negotiations with Gazprom, Moldova for the first time procured additionally needed gas quantities from alternative sources. In this period, Termocom switched to fuel oil utilization which is unfavorable option due to its high impact on the environment. The [WB Commodity Market Outlook 2021](#) anticipates that volatility and elevated prices for oil and gas will be maintained throughout the winter season whereas are likely to moderate next year on higher supply.
- The [IMF Global Outlook](#) downgraded the global economic growth for 2021 by 0.1 percentage points to 5.9% due to supply disruptions in developed economies and worsening pandemic situation in developing countries in 2021. The projections for 2022 suggest 4.9% economic growth globally due to high uncertainty on how quickly the spread of new variants of Covid-19 can be curbed. Beyond 2022 global growth is projected to slow down to about 3.3 percent over the medium term. For Moldova the estimates are modest for the 2021, yet more prospective for the upcoming years.
- The Minister of Education and Research (MEC) [announced](#) the epi situation in the educational sector. The number of students tested positive was 817 (compared to 751 in the previous week); 13,374 were in self-isolation (compared to 12,938 in the previous week); 296 teachers were positively confirmed (compared to 260 in the previous week), and 226 were in self-isolation (compared to 210 in the previous week). Of the non-teaching and auxiliary staff, 73 people were infected with the new virus (compared to 72 in the previous week), in self-isolation there were 83 people (compared to 77 in the previous week).



2.3 Human Rights update

- NTR

3 UN Social and Economic Response and Recovery Portfolio update

Please access <https://covid19response.un.md/> to see the Plan and the Project Portfolio in more detail, including on-going projects and initiatives still requiring financing.

3.1 Pillar 1: HEALTH FIRST: protecting health services and systems during the crisis

- 120,000 syringes for COVID19 vaccination and 16,670 safety boxes were procured and delivered with UNICEF support in country. Additionally, UNICEF procured 1 mln of syringes for COVID19 vaccination that will be delivered by December 2021.
- UNICEF contracted a national company for conducting the qualitative study among vaccination target groups on attitudes related to anti-COVID-19 vaccination. The results of the study will be used to inform relevant stakeholders, including government, development partners, and others, on improving effectiveness and targeting of communication materials, tools, and strategies. The qualitative assessment will focus on specific target groups and subgroups, such as families with children, youth, vulnerable households, Roma communities, and others.

- UNICEF is supporting the inspection mission of the Cold Chain Equipment (46 refrigerators) procured with COVAX support and delivered and distributed at regional and rayonal Centers of Public Health in August 2021.
- The mechanism for COVID-19 hospitals and beds activation have been developed and presented to MoH to improve the response of hospital system to COVID-19 pandemic. The flexible activation mechanism for hospitals involvement in COVID-19 case management have been based on assessment results and include rational use of capacities, identification and designation of referral facilities, availability of the intensive care unit (ICU) capabilities and infrastructure. The forecast of needed hospitals capacities was developed for each of all 4-alert levels and EPI forecast.
- The draft Roadmap with 16 priority actions and subsequent activities for strengthening of the Emergency Care System and institutional capacities as part of the health system and integrating the emergency preparedness and response was developed. With the WHO CO support the draft Roadmap was validated by the Ministry of Health working group and national experts after a series of the national experts' technical meetings. The findings will be used for legal framework development.
- The final Report on Pharmaceutical Supply Management (PSM) in the Republic of Moldova was submitted (Oct 2021) to the Ministry of Health. The follow-up activities on improvement of the PSM are based on the findings and assessment outcomes. The national action plan aligned to the MoH priorities will be developed to improve the PSM system.
- The essential health services continuity assessment was conducted in 100 healthcare facilities. Collected data is going to be analyzed by type of services and a joint report will be generated by a group of national experts supported by UN agencies and WHO lead.
- 20 health care centers have been evaluated randomly by Family Doctors Association in October 2021, under MoH with WHO support. Based on the results obtained, a report will be prepared with recommendations for main health stakeholders, local public administrations and state authorities in order to improve the vaccination processes and increase vaccination uptake.
- The prototype of the reengineered national (electronic) surveillance system for communicable diseases and public health events was presented and the component of the Laboratory Information System (LIS) for the 12 national public health laboratories is in the process of installation.
- The equipment and consumables on virus genome sequencing have been delivered to the country. The international team of field engineers have been deployed to the country in order to assure the equipment installation and calibration. A series of trainings were planned in the WHO reference laboratories.
- The IT solution was developed to improve the COVID-19 vaccination coverage data quality and monitoring with WHO support. The IT solution is based on QR scanning which will allow to fulfil the data in the national electronic registry of COVID-19 immunization. The last estimation made by border police was up to 3% of general population was vaccinated abroad. The digital solution will enable health authorities to know the COVID-19 vaccine coverage and standardize the process of data collection and compilation.
- The assessment of the infection prevention and control measures have been tested by WHO in the intensive care units from the district, municipal and national hospitals. The updated standardized assessment tool is used for data gathering. The findings will be used for the improvement of the IPC measures in the ICU departments.
- A series of seven hybrid: face-to-face and on-line trainings on the Severe COVID-19 clinical case management were conducted by WHO for ~ 255 intensive care unit and primary health care professionals from eight COVID-19 hospitals in Chisinau and 13 district hospitals. The trainings are associated with patient's consultation and discussion of COVID-19 cases. The IPC component is part of the training package.

- WHO conducted a training for 40 national experts from the National Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices (National Regulatory Authority - NRA) in medicine/vaccine safety/efficacy and quality/safety/efficacy dossier assessment. Best international practices on other routine COVID-19 medicines/vaccines registration procedures have been addressed. Trained national experts from NRA will facilitate smooth vaccine deployment by optimization of national regulatory process and procedures in order to ensure rapid access to vaccines.
- The WHO provided support in adjusting COVID-19 vaccination automated information system RVC-19 and in developing new functionalities development and uploaded COVID certificates (vaccination, recovery and test certificate and reports).
- The national scientific (on-line) conference *Together We Can Stop COVID-1 Pandemic* was organized with WHO and USAID support. The conference was organized by USMF "Nicolae Testimianu", the Ministry of Health and the National Agency for Public Health. The conference with audience of 17499 persons, [broadcasted nation-wide](#), aimed to present the latest data and evidence on the impact of COVID-19 vaccination.
- WHO updated the COVID-19 vaccine forecast and absorption scenarios which were submitted to Ministry of Health in order to improve vaccine and supplies planning for short and medium term. Additionally, was developed the forecast tool for COVID-19 which is based on effective reproduction number (R_t), forecasted according to retrospective existing evidence. Forecast tool has 3 scenarios and provided 96% accuracy in forecasting the number of cases for September.
- IT equipment -154 MFD printers, 121 Laptops, 19 all-in-one desktop PCs, 22 Wi-Fi routers and 27 UPSs were procured in the framework of EU projects for COVID-19 immunization and EU Solidarity, which is a part of the country COVID-19 pandemic response, implemented by WHO. The IT goods are dedicated for strengthening the immunization system, improving the surveillance and laboratory capacities.
- 500 pulse oximeters, laboratory reagents for sequencing device, 20 multiparametric patient monitors and 151 respirator masks were procured in the framework of EU for Moldova Project and by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. All items received under WHO support amounting to 393,000 USD will be distributed by the Ministry of Health to the medical authorities of the country.

3.2 Pillar 2: PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social protection and basic services

- With UNDP support, over 200 teachers and school managers from all schools from the Gagauz Territorial Administrative Unit were initiated in digital learning aspects to be used to adjust to the complexities of the pandemic, through a dedicated and comprehensive capacity building support on developing IT skills of pupils, using digital teaching resources, including STEAM projects.
- UNDP, within the EU-financed Support to Confidence Measures Programme, supported the members of the thematic platforms to assist professionals from both riverbanks in the area of education - on inclusive education and hybrid learning models, as well as in the area of health – on first aid support.

3.3 Pillar 4: MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

- NTR

3.4 Pillar 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- UNDP and EU launched the [Mayors for Economic Growth Facility](#), part of a regional initiative covering Eastern Partnership countries, aiming at economic inclusive growth and job creation in secondary cities, by enhancing the capacities of LPAs, creating inclusive innovation processes and portfolios of interventions that

support the green recovery from the pandemic. The first call for expression of interest from LPAs to engaging in portfolio approach to support the economic recovery was also launched in October.

- UNDP and SDC supported local producers from Cahul region to revive and boost their economic activities, with the launching of an agri-food and touristic market in Slobozia Mare providing safe and sanitary conditions for trading local products and attracting tourist in the Southern region of the country.

4 Communications and Advocacy

- UNICEF jointly with WHO supported the MoH in organization a National Week of Immunization on 25-31 October in the RM. [Video spots, printed materials](#) were developed and distributed among the population to raise awareness on COVID-19 vaccination.
- UNICEF jointly with WHO developed a series of [human-interest stories](#) of people who have lost their relatives due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNICEF supported [communication activation](#) on Global Handwashing Day highlighting the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, including for viruses like COVID-19.
- WHO in partnership with UNICEF and development' partners provided support to the MoH and NPHA to organize the National COVID-19 Vaccination Week in the period of 25-31 October 2021, shaping messages, and conduct activities. The information teams consist of volunteers, representatives of PLAs, territorial Public Health Centers have been deployed to lowest vaccination performance villages and rayons. The teams were equipped with branded vests (produced with WHO and USAID support), volunteers distributing information flyers, textile masks and pens with disinfectants (procured and produced with WHO and EU support).
- A series of video tutorials with well-known persons, members of Parliaments and Government, head of UN agencies delivering a message in support of vaccination was produced by WHO with EU support. IN support of this a leaflet - *All about COVID-19 vaccination*, in both Romanian and Russian languages have been produced and printed to be distributed by volunteers of information teams.
- WHO produced with USAID support a sticker with all COVID-19 prevention measures, including personal hygiene was produced for all schools across the country to be placed at entrance and in main schools' points (canteens, toilets, conference rooms, etc.).
- WHO supports vaccination information campaign through pharmacies – individuals talks & recommendations, distribution of information flyers and others.
- WHO supports COVID-19 vaccination awareness campaign among students and youth *Roll up your sleeve, get vaccinated!* with support of the ministries of Health, Education and Science, Association of Medical Students and Residents and Council of Rectors of the Republic of Moldova, with WHO and EU support. A series of information sessions and vaccination marathons were organized.
- WHO and EU supported the MoH in launching the awareness campaign on mental health related to COVID-19: *How are you today?* The campaign's aim is to promote national network of the community mental health services, and to raise awareness in the society, tackling disorders such as depression, anxiety, stress, etc. A video spot, web page, thematic photo project, useful information were produced – www.cumtesimtiazii.md