



# COVID-19 Response and Recovery Monthly Bulletin

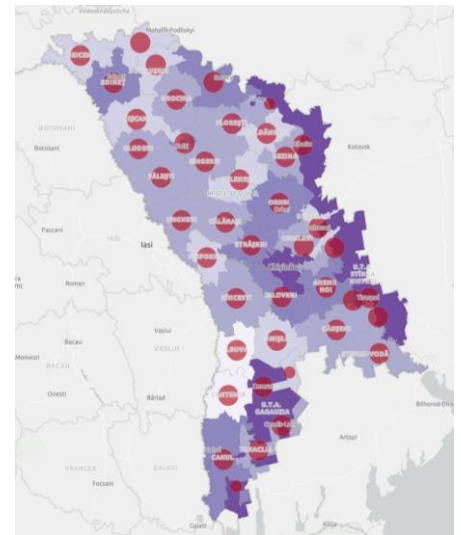
## February 2021



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### 1 COVID-19 Epi and Health situation update

The monthly number of new coronavirus cases increased substantially in February, which saw a total of 25,649 new cases. This represents a 71% increase compared to the number of confirmed new cases in the previous month. This sharp increase in infections is also reflected in the weekly figures for this month. The number of weekly cases rose by 17-18% between the first few weeks of February. The number then increased by 33% between the last two weeks of the month. The increase in the number of cases from the first to the last week of the month was 83%.



As a result of this substantial—and accelerating—rise in infections, the total number of confirmed cases has surpassed the 180,000-case mark and now stands at 185,453. The period between reaching the 160,000-case mark and the 170,000-case mark was 13 days, and it took an additional 10 days to reach the 180,000-case mark. This is significantly less than the 18-20 days it took to add every 10,000 new cases between the end of December and end of January and more reminiscent of the 7-8 days periods in between marks, characteristic of the most acute phase of the pandemic so far.

The total number of active cases steadily increased from around 6,000 in the beginning of February to the current figure of 15,326 for the last day of the month. The current number of active cases represents 8.3% of the total number of registered cases.

The daily percentage of coronavirus tests to return a positive result, which was 23.9%, on average, in January, increased to an average of 30.3% in February.

The overall crude cumulative incidence of cases per 100,000 currently stands at 5,338. The crude cumulative incidence of cases for the last 30 days is 766, which is markedly higher compared to the same figure last month and indicative of the accelerated transmission of the virus. The crude cumulative incidence of cases over the last seven and fourteen days is 250 and 439, respectively, with both figures exceeding the previous week's numbers by at least 25% and reflecting the uptick in cases mentioned above.

The number of deaths increased by 511 in February, exceeding the 453 fatalities registered in the previous month. The weekly figures, however, suggest a somewhat more nuanced picture. The number of deaths for the first two weeks of the month were comparable to the weekly figures reported in January. However, weeks 3 and 4 saw an upturn in the weekly number of COVID-19-associated fatalities. There were 169 deaths registered in the last week of February, which represents a 61% increase over the number reported in the first week of the month. After increasing to 2.2% at the end of January, the case fatality rate somewhat decreased

to 2.1%. Currently, the total number of deaths stands at 3,949. The average age of patients who have died from the disease is 67.3. Overall, about 95% of all deaths have been reported in patients aged 50 years or older even though this age group accounts for about 50% of all confirmed cases.

As a percentage of daily infections, the cases among people aged 60 and over have been growing in the most recent months. After rising to an average of 36% of daily infections in January, the percentage of infections for this age group somewhat decreased to an average of 33% in February. The 60+ age group represents approximately 22% of the Moldovan population, but 30% of the overall cases and almost 80% of all deaths.

Contrary to the increasing number of new cases, the number of patients who have recovered from the disease registered an additional decrease in February. A total of 16,088 recoveries were reported during the month. This figure is markedly lower than the number of new confirmed infections, which explains the increase in the number of active cases mentioned previously. The total number of recoveries now stands at 166,178, which represents 89.6% of all cases.

Weekly figures painted a similar picture, with the weekly number of new cases surpassing the weekly number of recoveries during every week of the month. Moreover, the number of weekly recoveries for the first week of February was 3,695, which increased to 4,285 for the last week of the month, an increase of 16%. This is significantly lower compared to the rise in new infections which increased by 83% from the first to the last week of the month, contributing to an increase in the number of active cases.

The contagion rate ( $R_0$ ) remained over 1 for all four weeks of February but has maintained similar values compared to the latter half of January. The overall contagion rate currently stands at 1.19. The rate is uneven across the country, with certain districts registering considerably higher rates than others. Besarabasca (2.05), Riscani (1.94) and Causeni (1.60) currently have the highest contagion rates in the country. At the same time, Taraclia (0.89), Falesti (0.91) and Edinet (0.96) have some of the lowest contagion rates in the country. The contagion rate in Chisinau stands at 1.15.

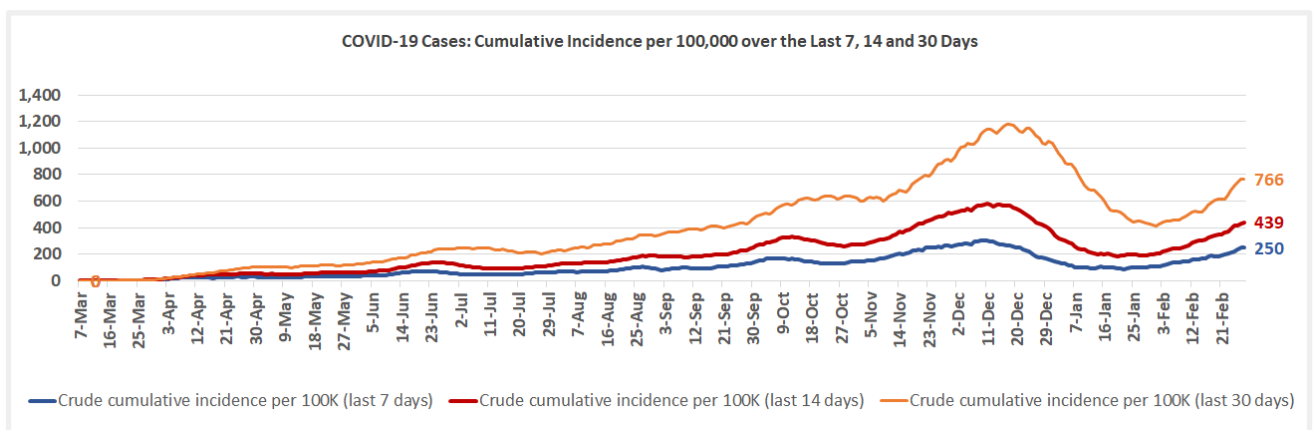
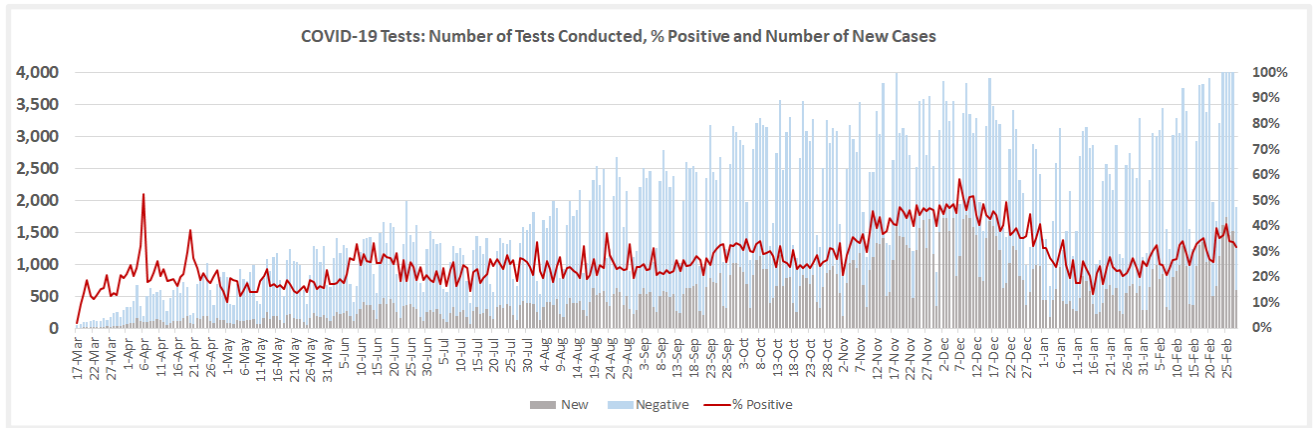
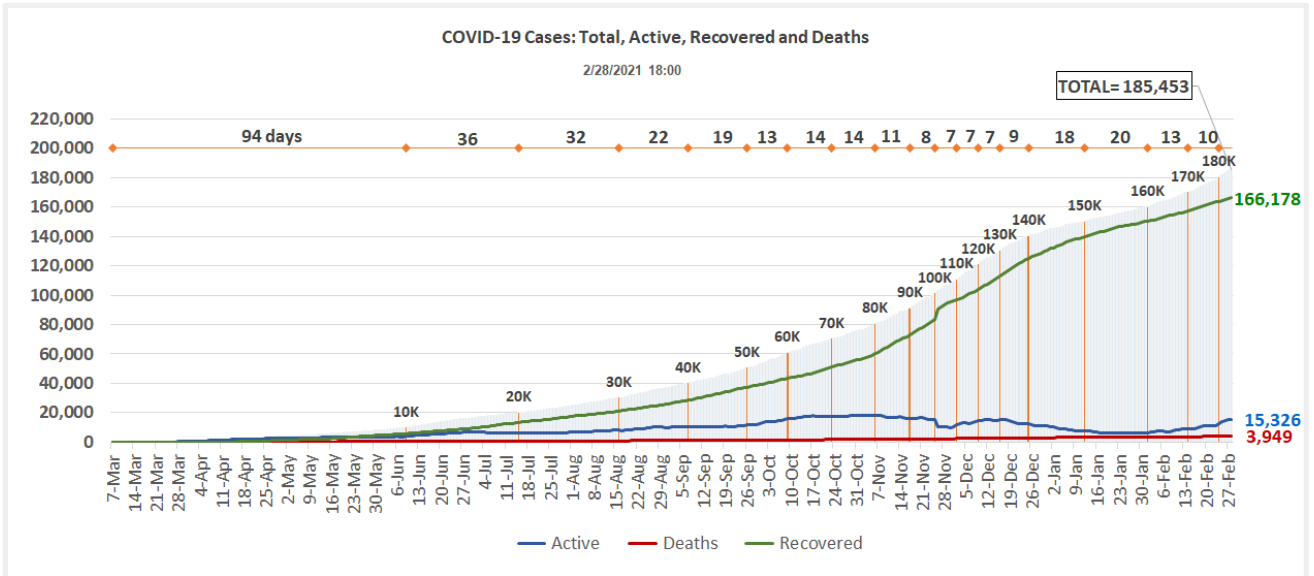
In terms of geographical distribution, Chisinau, with 43% of all cases, remains the most affected area if the number of cases is considered. With 11% of all confirmed cases, the Transnistria region follows in the list of most affected areas. Balti, Ialoveni, and ATU Gagauzia each account for an additional 3% of all cases. The relative extent to which these areas have been affected by the pandemic has not changed in the recent months. All other areas have each reported 2% or less of the total number of cases.

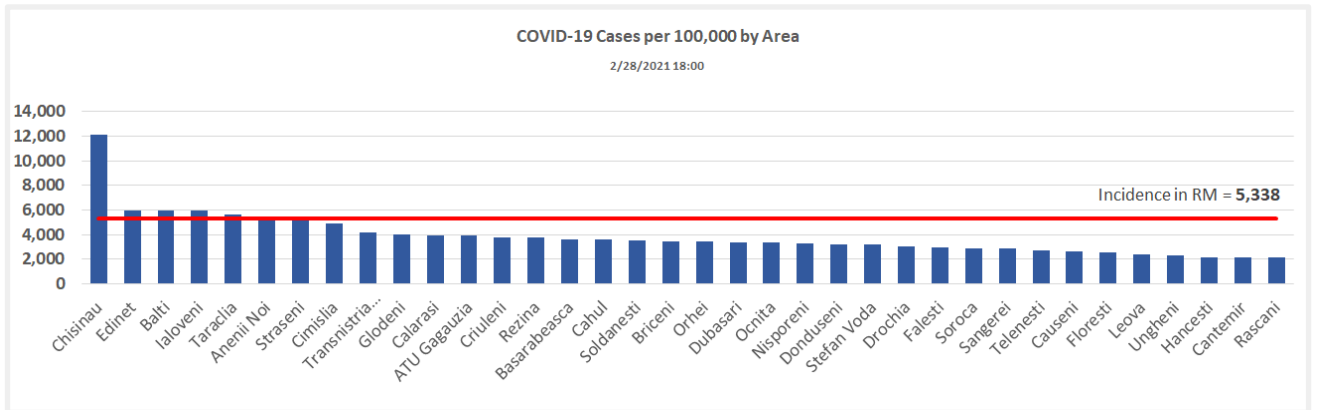
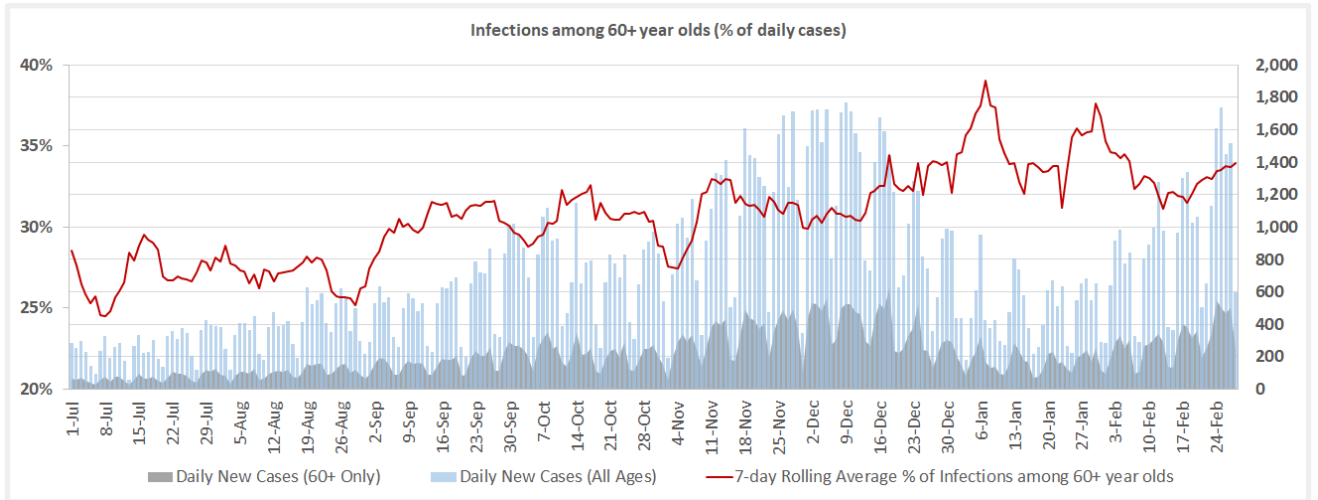
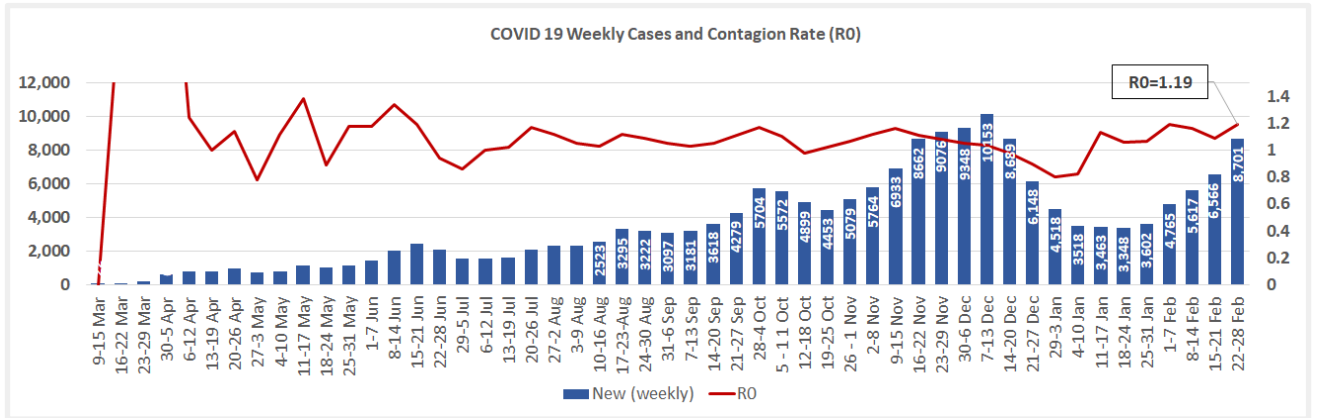
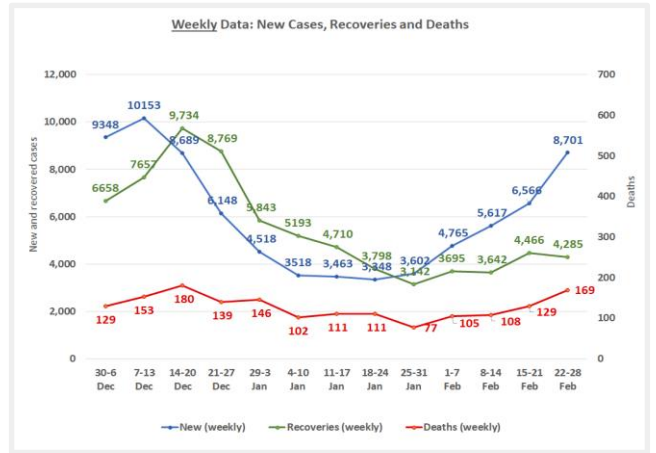
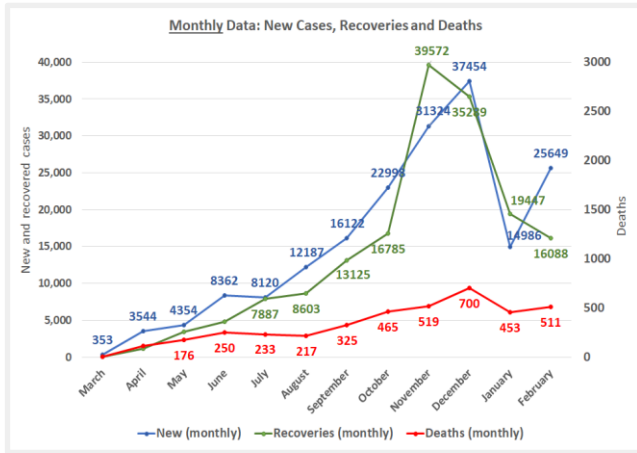
If accounting for the size of their populations, Chisinau remains the most affected area with over 12,000 cases per 100,000. The capital is followed by Edinet, Balti, Ialoveni, Taraclia, Anenii Noi, and Straseni, which have all surpassed the 5,000-cases per 100,000-population milestone. The picture is somewhat different if the cumulative incidence of cases per 100,000 is examined over the last 14 days. With over 1,000 cases per 100,000 registered over the last 14 days, Chisinau has been most affected by the pandemic in recent weeks. The capital is followed by Ocnita, which registered nearly 900 cases per 100,000 over the last 14 days. This is reflective of a significant rise in cases in this area in the recent weeks. Ialoveni, Anenii Noi, and Straseni follow in the list of districts with the highest number of cases per 100,000 population in the last 14 days.

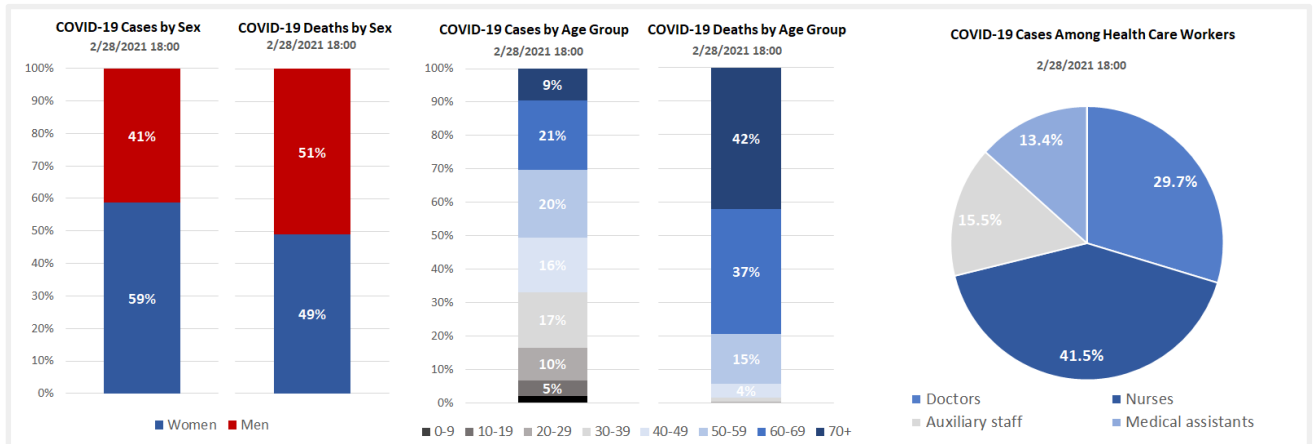
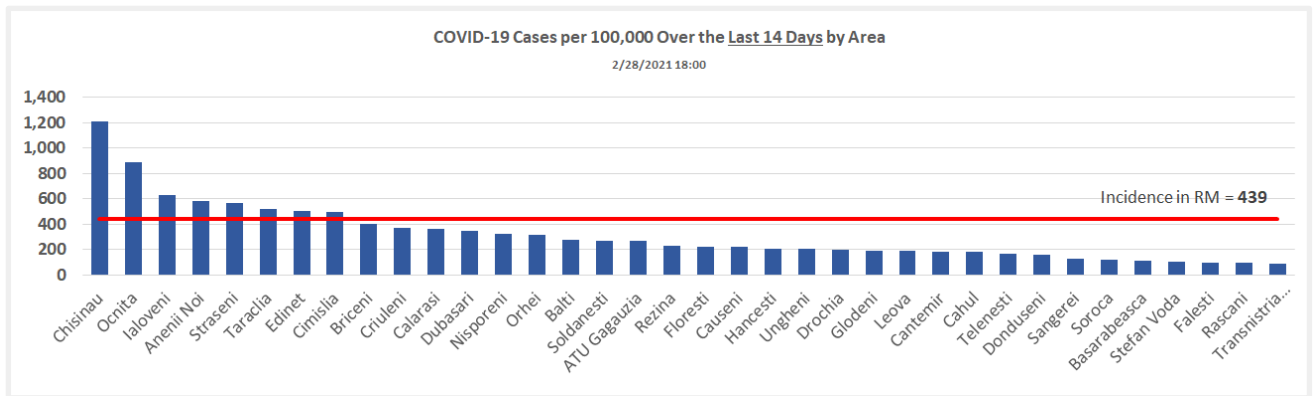
More women have been infected with the coronavirus than men since the beginning of the pandemic, 59% vs 41%. However, the percentage of men who have died from the disease continued to be somewhat higher than that of women throughout the entire month of February, 51% vs 49%. The case fatality rate among men (2.6%) has also consistently exceeded the case fatality rate among women (1.8%).

The share of health care workers in the total number of cases stands at around 9%. Nearly 16,900 doctors, nurses, medical assistants and other staff from the health care sector have been infected with the virus since the beginning of the outbreak.

Real time figures and graphs can be accessed [here](#) in Romanian and in Russian [here](#). This site has more than 2.3 million views to date.







## 1.1 Restrictions\*

\*These are subject to changes and amendment and should be viewed as an overview and not as a definitive source for decision making.

- The [Decision No. 47 of the National Extraordinary Commission in Public Health](#) from February 26<sup>th</sup> institutes a series of new restrictions, i.e. compulsory PCR COVID-19 negative test at border crossing when entering Moldova, public and private entities and organizations will have only critical staff attending physical workplaces while for the rest will create conditions for remote work, all educational institutions revert to online teaching only, all scientific events shall be suspended, as well as the work of cultural and entertainment entities - theaters, concerts etc., regional Commissions are to develop and institute special rules for public transport circulation and other measures;
- The MoHLSP updated the [List of countries with Red zone classification](#), that is in effect as of March 1, 2021. The travelers into Moldova from the Red zone countries need to self-isolate for a 14-days period.

## 2 General situation update

- On February 9<sup>th</sup>, the United Nations in Moldova launched a dedicated website for the [COVID-19 Response and Recovery \(www.covid19response.un.md\)](http://www.covid19response.un.md);
- On February 24<sup>th</sup>, the UN Resident Coordinator and the WHO Representative [met](#) with the Prime Minister and discussed the COVID-10 epidemiological situation and management options;
- On February 26<sup>th</sup>, three vaccines were registered by the Medicines and Medical Devices Agency: Pfizer, Sputnik V, and AstraZeneca;



- On February 27<sup>th</sup>, a [consignment of 21,600 doses of COVID-19 vaccines](#) was delivered to Moldova from Romania to support the country's response to the pandemic. This delivery follows Moldova's request for vaccines through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, to which Romania has responded rapidly with this offer. Lithuania has also pledged support in this regard;
- The Government, under the Prime Minister's Office, has set up a [Public Health Advisory Council](#). The council was created to provide expertise, advice and recommendations in the effective management of the epidemiological situation caused by the spread of COVID-19, including other epidemiological risk situations affecting public health.

## 2.1 Political update

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- On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the decree of President Sandu on the re-nomination of Natalia Gavrilita to the post of prime minister. The court ruled that the President must hold new consultations with parties represented in parliament in order to reach a new compromise on the nomination of a prime ministerial candidate. The court further stated that the president is obliged to appoint a candidate nominated by the parliamentary majority. However, it added that the majority should be established via a formal procedure, including announcement of the list of MPs that have formed the parliamentary majority and their explicit readiness to support a candidate for the prime minister post.

## 2.2 Economic and social update

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- According to [NBS](#), the annual inflation for January 2021 continued to decline reaching historically low level of 0.22%. Average consumers prices in January 2021 went up by 0.46% versus December 2020 and this fact was stipulated by slight growth in prices for food (by 0.58%) and non-food items (0.60%), while prices for services provided to population went up insignificantly (by 0.08%);
- The annual turnover in retail trade in 2020 grew by 4.6% (in comparative prices) versus 2019, while turnover of wholesale trade decreased by 5.6%, and turnover in services provided to population showed the highest decline of 15.7% in 2020 compared to 2019. Further details can be found [here](#);
- The [NBS data](#) suggest that in 2020 industrial production declined by 5.5% (in gross series) being caused by 7.1% decline in the processing industry. The downwards trend was slightly off-set by the growth in extractives (+9.5%) and energy and utilities supply (water, heating, air conditioning etc) by 2.3%. Food processing declined by 6% in December 2020 (vs same period of 2019) caused by the slowdown in the processing/canning of fruits and vegetables, production of dairy products, meat processing, animal fats and oils production. Besides, other processing industries also experienced some decline, amongst which are drinks and beverages, manufacturing of automotive and spare parts, textiles, electrical equipment, devices and machinery, paper production;
- The [NBS data for 2020](#) reveal a slowdown in Moldova's trade: exports decreased by 10.6% versus 2019, while its imports declined by 7.3%. Export of domestically produced goods and services (76.7% in total exports) decreased by 4.6%, while total re-exports (goods after processing and net re-exports) declined by over a quarter compared to 2019. Noteworthy that in December 2020 Moldova exported by 16.7% fewer goods and services than in November 2020. Amongst the main export destinations in 2020 were Romania (28.4% of total exports), Germany (9.1%), Russia (8.7%), Italy (8.6%), Turkey (6.9%), despite the decline in export trade with all of these countries. Although imports increased in December versus November 2020, it was by over 5% lower than in the same period of 2019. Majority of imports are still coming from the EU-27, the CIS and China. However, as imports from the EU and CIS declined respectively by 12.7% and 7% in 2020 versus 2019, China increased imports to Moldova by 7.3% becoming the leading country in Moldova's import structure (followed by Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Turkey and Italy).

As a result of slowdown in trade activity, the trade balance deficit with the EU-27 and CIS was reduced by 22.7% and 4.2% respectively. Imports by individuals also declined by 7.2% mainly due to reduced import of automobiles which occupy a share of over 82% in total imports by citizens;

- The construction sector grew during 2020 by 3.7% compared to the same period 2019. This increase was pulled by capital repair works (grew by 5.7%) and by current repairs (increased by 18.5%). New constructions on contrary declined by 3.4%;
- The [NBS](#) also informs that transportation of people declined by 46.1% in 2020 versus 2019. The decline in airway travel was 75.6%, road travel – 45.8% and railway travel - 38.0%. Noteworthy that busses and minibuses transported by 45.8% less passengers during 2020 than that in 2019;
- In 2020 the tourism companies received by 76% less visits than in 2019, while the majority (68%) of received tourists were Moldova's citizens and only one third of tourists were visitors from abroad. Overall, the number of non-resident tourists in Moldova declined by 84% in 2020 compared to 2019, while the for resident tourists this number is 69%. Further details could be found [here](#);
- The Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure has embarked upon the development of social entrepreneurship programs. In this context a [conference on social entrepreneurship](#) has been organized on 16.02.2021 by the MoEI with support from the EU. The MoEI is currently developing a new national program for social entrepreneurship 2021-2025. In addition, the ODIMM is engaged in the development of National Program on financing and mentorship for social entrepreneurship. To this end, the state budget allocated 1 mln MDL for 2021, with follow-up financing of 5 mln MDL during 2022-2023 growing to 10 mln MDL within 2024-2025.

### 2.3 Education system situation update

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- According to the Ministry of Education' [information on the epidemiological situation](#) in the education system, as of February 22<sup>nd</sup>, there were 15 institution activating only on-line and 216 classes being in self-isolation. There were 363 positive cases of COVID-19 infections among students/pupils and 6602 were placed in self-isolation, 317 infections among teaching staff, with 319 people being placed in self-isolation. From non-didactical staff with positive tests are 119 persons with 120 in self-isolation;
- To prevent the further spread of COVID-19 infection, ensure a safe and healthy environment and observance of safe hygiene practices inside the re-opened preschools and outside, UNICEF supported the on-line trainings of preschool personnel, LPAs and parents/caregivers which were finalized this month. As a result, 12,945 preschool managerial and didactical staff; 18,650 non-didactical staff (medical assistants, nursemaids, educators' assistants, cooks, laundry women, and storekeepers etc.) and LPAs representatives; and 150,000 parents/caregivers enhanced their knowledge and skills on practical application of the tools for COVID-19 and infectious diseases prevention and control nationally. A Guide for parents of preschoolers on Early Learning and Care during COVID-19 pandemic, Romanian and Russian versions, was developed in cooperation with Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, National Agency for Public Health, National Agency for Food Security, WHO, UNICEF and CNETIF CSO, and disseminated widely to ensure safe behaviour and environment in preschools and outside them. These interventions were implemented with USAID financial support;
- To promote further increased access to continuing learning of children with disabilities, UNICEF procured 163 educational kits which were distributed accordingly.

## 2.4 Gender and Human Rights

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- The occupation-based inequalities of women and men worsened due to COVID-19 pandemic. Women's employment rate dropped more significantly during the state of emergency. The share of those who continued to go to work was by 15 pp smaller than the share of men. The gender perspective revealed that during the pandemic, men practiced teleworking to a larger extent. Compared to the specific situation at the outset of the pandemic, this share increased from 22% to 32.7%. Nonetheless, women continue to represent the largest share in this context – 36.1% in comparison with 29.4% in case of men. The care roles fully assumed by a large share of women during the isolation period, the difficulty to cope efficiently with the work-life juggle, determined them to be less active on the labour market and as a result, they earned lower income as compared to men.

The above are some of the findings of the analysis of gender inequalities on the labour market during the pandemic "[UNEQUAL WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC](#)" that aims to emphasize the macro effects of the pandemic from men's and women's occupational perspectives. The research was developed by Center Partnership for Development under UN Women contract with Sweden financials support and represents the second Gender Assessment based on the findings of the previous one (Assessment of COVID-19 impact on gender roles), which is assessing more in depth the impact of pandemic on care work, job market and financial impact of lockdown on population from gender equality perspective. The survey was carried out at the end of November 2021 on 1000 people aged 18+ and showed that pandemic continues to exacerbate the double burden that women practicing teleworking carry as they have to combine paid and unpaid work. At the same time, the research emphasized a worsening of the financial vulnerability of men.

## 2.5 Transnistria region

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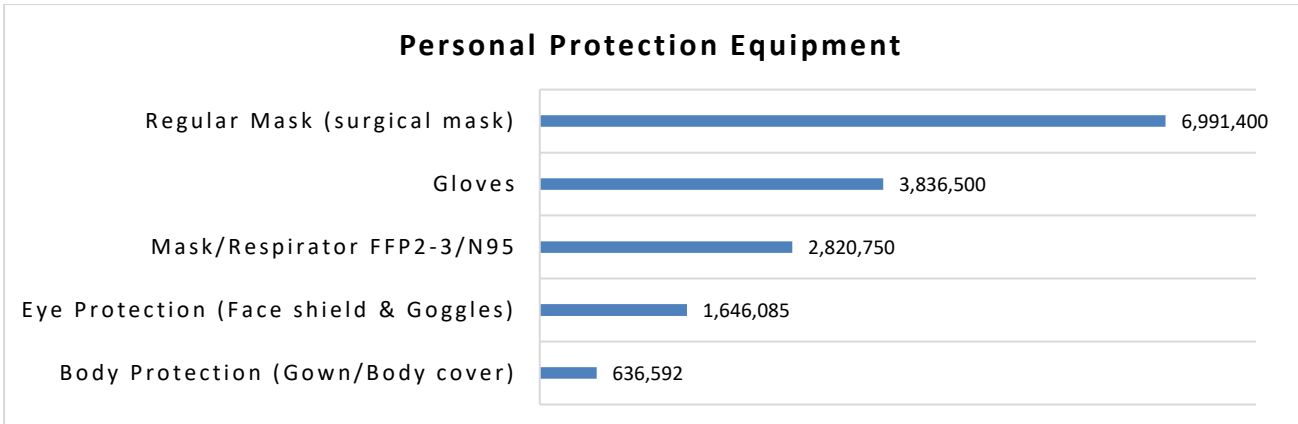
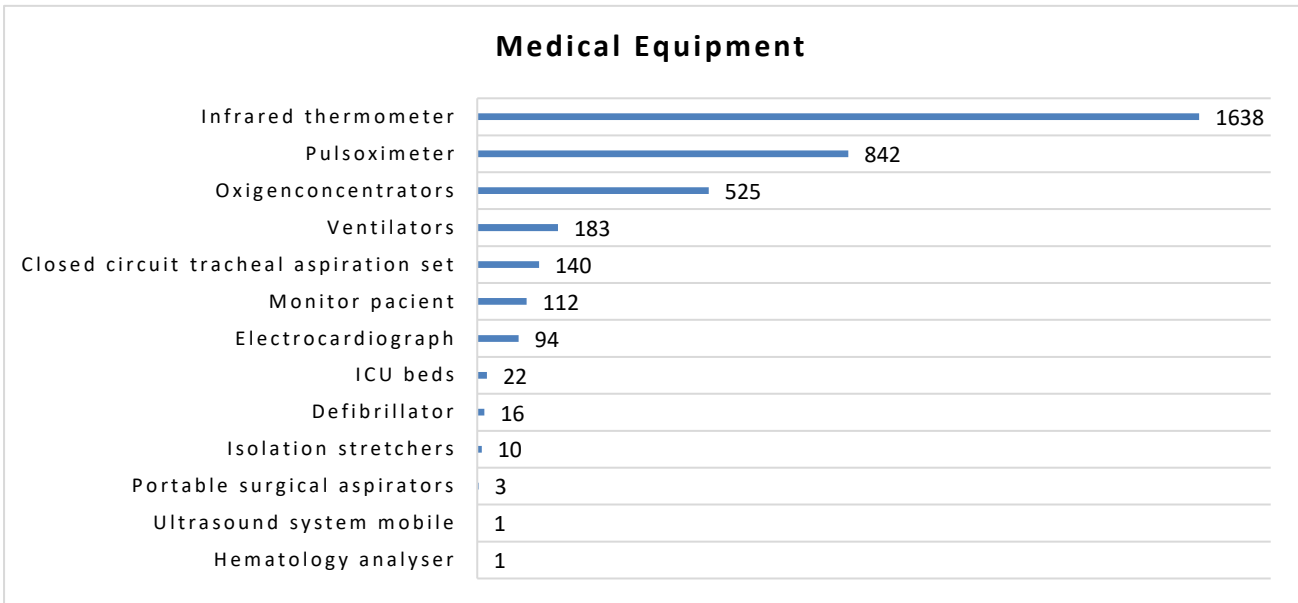
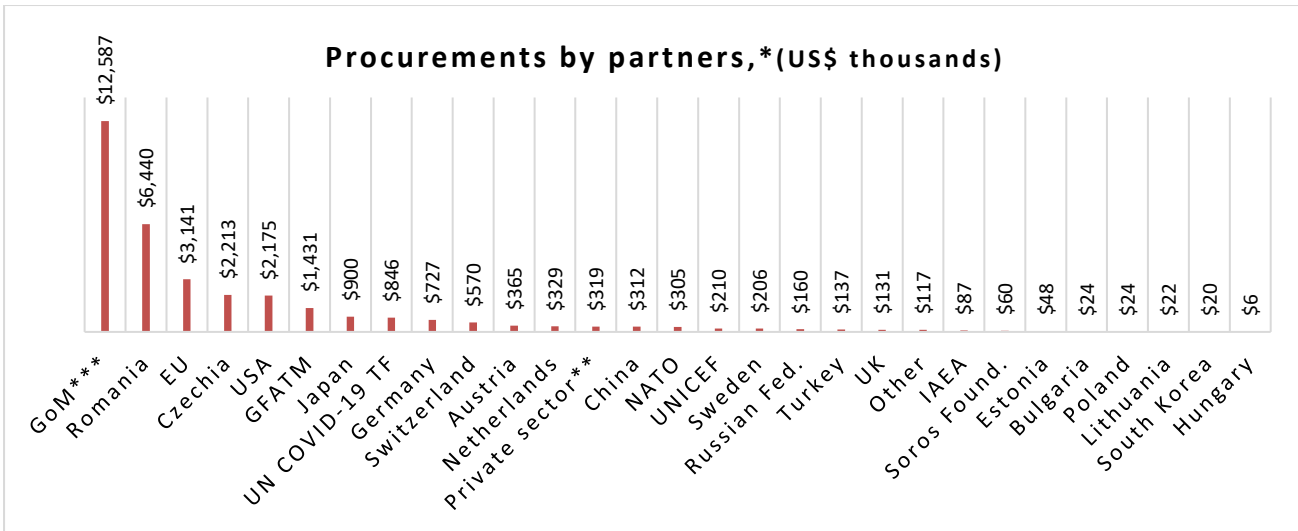
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ann Linde, in her role as Chairperson in Office of the OSCE, concluded her official one-day visit to the Republic of Moldova on February 17. In a press conference, she stated that the OSCE remains vital to the Transnistria Region Settlement Process and its resolution. She said that was encouraged by the clear messages from the sides and observers in support of this process, but added that challenges remain, and that the continuation of small but concrete steps are important to keep the process on track. Her mission focused talks on concrete steps to build trust and real dialogue between the Sides to move the settlement process forward at all levels. She also highlighted with the sides the need for progress on key issues, including the protection of human rights and freedom of movement, as she believes they are necessary to improve local living conditions and ensure the connectivity of both banks of the Nistru River.

## 2.6 Aid Coordination - data on procurements for COVID-19

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### Mapping of contributions to the Health System for COVID response in Moldova





\*Note - data only for contracted/procured PEEs, medical equipment and technical assistance COVID related. Committed and/or pledged contributions are not reflected. Data are captured from various sources, i.e. media and may not be accurate. The process of reflecting donors/contributions is ongoing, and data is updated once details of procured items are confirmed. For more information please send an email to [veaceslav.palade@un.org](mailto:veaceslav.palade@un.org) and/or [garami@who.int](mailto:garami@who.int)

\*\* Private sector companies: Endava, Orange Moldova, Lisedfarm SRL, Moldretail Grup SRL, Kaufland, Moldcell Moldova, Starnet SRL, Gedeon Rihter, Farmacia Familiei SRL, Svibmagtex SRL, Miso Textile SRL, Zernoff SRL, Aromcom SRL, Art Vest SRL, Dita Est Farm SRL, Tetis International Co SRL, Rihpangalfarma SRL, Sonaris Com

\*\*\* The procurements of the Government of RM include the materials and supplied procured from the WB loan: Moldova Emergency COVID-19 Response Project

### 3 UN Social and Economic Response and Recovery Portfolio update

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

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

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- The simulation exercise (SimeEX) on COVID-19 vaccine delivery was conducted on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. The SimeEx was led by the National COVID-19 Immunization Focal Point team, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection and the National Agency for Public Health jointly with the WHO, aimed at testing the COVID-19 vaccine immunization system readiness in order to identify the strengths and potential threats which might affect vaccine delivery;
- Two rounds of the training workshops on COVID-19 immunization have been conducted for the professionals from the vaccination centers in hospitals and primary health care facilities as well as professionals from the long-term care facilities. A training workshop was conducted for health care workers from the health care facilities from the left bank of Nistru river. Vaccine delivery, storage conditions, vaccine safety monitoring as well as adverse events following immunization monitoring procedures were discussed;
- WHO Moldova jointly with the MoHLSP, National Agency for Public Health (NAPH) and NRA participated in the Health group meeting on immunization in the health care institutions from the left bank of the Nistru river on the OSCE negotiation platform;
- The e-registry for COVID-19 vaccination was developed by the WHO jointly with professionals from the MoHLSP and NAPH. The e-registry will allow to monitor the progress on COVID-19 immunization and is available in the vaccination centers in the HCFs for vaccination reporting and planning;
- A training for trainers on the use of SARS-CoV-2 antigen rapid diagnostic tests (Ag-RDTs) took place on February 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with 17 participants. The training conducted by the WHO professionals was composed of a theoretical and a practical part and allows trainees to understand Ag-RDTs testing methods. The country is working to adapt the National Laboratory testing strategy and the SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Test will be integral part;
- Between 9-10 February 2021 a training for use of Laboratory Test Costing Tool (LTCT) was conducted for 25 participants. The laboratory professionals from the national and regional laboratories were familiarized with Laboratory Test Costing Tool which allows to estimate the laboratory needs. Standardized approaches for laboratory expenditures allows to quantify the lab consumables and reagents as well as to estimate human resources needed which are part of the laboratory quality management system;
- During the month of February, 12 trainings on severe COVID-19 cases management and ICU support have been conducted with WHO support. Approx. 225 professionals (ICU units and hospital staff), managers and professionals from the national, municipal and district hospitals (Cimislia, Ungheni, Soroca, etc), have been trained on the COVID-19 severe cases treatment and clinical management;
- WHO continues to provide support to MoHLSP in external aid coordination, informing partners and donors regarding the EPI situation and public health measures for COVID-19 public health emergency response. The continuous needs assessment for the health system and resource mobilizations as well as devices and goods procurement are provided by the WHO support. A databased with donor's contributions related to COVID-19 response is compiled by the WHO consultant and is available on the MoHLSP website;
- The MoHLSP had updated the COVID-19 clinical case management protocol and a series of trainings were conducted with WHO support for health care workers from the all rural and urban primary health care

facilities. The HCWs involved in COVID-19 clinical case management were familiarized on updated approaches with regards to treatment, laboratory testing and patients release from the isolation.

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

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- UNICEF Moldova provides continuous support to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research to develop the new long-term Education Sector Strategy for 2021-2030 and medium-term Programme of Action 2021-2025. The new policy documents focus on the creation of a resilient, inclusive, friendly and effective education system and will include a separate component on prevention of humanitarian crisis;
- A training package on efficient protection measures during the COVID-19 pandemic has been developed under a UN Women led project with financial support from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The training will be conducted during March -April 2021 for 50 NGO staff members and volunteers from both banks of Dniester river working at the national and local level, who are members of the NGO Task Force on COVID-19 and Human Rights. Within the same initiative, procurements and deliveries started for food packets and PPEs for identified 2700 beneficiaries;
- UNICEF with USAID funding, and in partnership with CCF Moldova NGO continues the nationwide implementation of supporting WASH-related actions and increasing the knowledge and skills of managerial and teaching staff in schools and residential institutions on prevention of COVID-19 and infectious diseases. During the reporting period (mid- January to mid-February 2021) 96 online sessions were organized of which 20 sessions in Russian that involved 2942 teaching staff. The cumulative number of staff in the education sector, since the start of training in Q4, 2020, reached 13 119 (of which 197 are staff from residential institutions and 1207 are managerial staff in schools). The capacity building activities will continue until end of May 2021.

### **3.3 Pillar 3: ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector and workers**

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- The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of trainings (5 modules) for at least 200 women are planned to start at the beginning of March 2021 by UN Women (with its implementing partner- ODMM) within the project "Responding to the urgent needs of women and girls in marginalized and vulnerable situation exacerbated by COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia", financed by Government of Japan. The series of training will be organized on the topics as job hunting and Job market insertion training, Digital skills - Social Media Marketing and the use of new technologies, Starting a business and business planning, Crisis management, business support tools and programs in Moldova, Women empowerment and needs-tailored counselling the organization;
- UN Women organized a series of individual and group psychological counselling that started in February, aiming to help at least 100 women entrepreneurs and women from underrepresented groups who are likely to suffer from the impact of the pandemic outbreak in Moldova. Each Friday an online webinar session is organized on the topic related to increasing women entrepreneur's resilience in the pandemic crisis. <https://www.facebook.com/respiro.md>;
- ILO assisted the Territorial Commission for Collective Consultations and Bargaining (CTCNC) from Causeni district to endorse a Local Employment Partnership (LEP) which includes 5 specific projects to remove barriers to job creation for people most affected by COVID-19, as seasonal worker, inactive young women and men and returned women migrants due to the COVID-19 crisis, in particular from the care economy in Western Europe. The LEP implementation will contribute to the creation and formalization of 145 jobs, initiation of 50 businesses in sectors with job creation potential such as beekeeping, agricultural product processing, creative industry, and the expansion of 50 small and micro enterprises. The project is financed by ILO and Austrian Development Agency, the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation;

- A study '[COVID-19 Impact on Air Quality in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova](#)' was presented at a [UNDP regional dialogue on 12 February 2021](#);
- The national launch of [UNDP's Human Development Report](#) was conducted on 18 February 2021. The [online dialogue](#) gathered more than 100 participants, including representatives of the Government, development partners, private sector and civil society. Participants discussed several policy recommendations for green recovery;
- UNDP Moldova and SDC [support the second edition of the Governmental Program DAR 1+3](#), launched in February 2021, offering grants to HTAS acting as partners of LPAs in engaging Diaspora for local development;
- Local Action Groups in rural communities from Cahul and Ungheni launched 47 development initiatives under a UNDP project with European Union funding within the [EU4Moldova: Focal Regions Programme](#). The implementation of micro-projects will also contribute to the sustainable development of communities by using green technologies such as local economic development (LED) to expand public lighting in several localities, equipping local companies with modern and energy efficient technology as well as promoting cycling by installing public bike racks.

### **3.4 Pillar 4: MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION**

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- FAO finalized a comprehensive drought assessment and its impact on the crop and livestock sector. The report also includes recommendations for short-term measures, as well as medium- and long-term adaptation measures;
- In response to the new wave of COVID-19 pandemic and medium-term rural economic recovery, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia along with relevant Country Offices re-launched the Agrifood Supply Chain Survey dedicated to the monitoring and assessment of the COVID-19 impact on agriculture/agri-food supply chains and the people's livelihood. The survey will continue to fill the knowledge and data gap in a coordinated way to identify disruptions along food supply chains and information on food security and nutrition and to advocate for evidence-based policy-solutions and global food coalition;

### **3.5 Pillar 5: SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

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- The UNRCO presented initial findings from their most recent round of the survey on the impact of COVID on Social Cohesion in Moldova. The data for this round were collected by phone in December 2020 and January 2021 from 1620 respondents, of which 300 were from the left bank. The 23 survey questions, some of which included sub-questions, aimed to measure various indicators, among them: social responsibility, social/ psycho-emotional impact, perception of COVID-19 risks, social tolerance, human rights, and gender bias. The initial findings showed only minimal changes in the responses from the last round of the survey that was carried out in July 2020.

## **4 Communications and Advocacy**

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- WHO and UNICEF supported the MoHLSP in the development of its Communication strategy and Action Plan on anti-COVID-19 immunization. The awareness campaign „Be safe: get COVID-19 vaccine” contains messages on vaccines benefits, printed materials for targeted audiences, video and audio messages, a webpage, etc.;

- WHO and UNICEF, with financial support from USAID, as part of the National Vaccination Campaign against COVID-19 implemented jointly with the MoHLSP and National Agency for Public Health (NAPH) supported an online talk shows with public health experts on the following topics:
  - ✓ [“Everything you need to know about COVID-19 vaccination in Moldova”](#) with Alexei Ceban, epidemiologist at NAPH,
  - ✓ [“Who will be vaccinated against COVID-19 and when immunization will begin.”](#) with Liliana Iașan, head of the Territorial Medical Association ‘Buiucani’,
  - ✓ [“Is vaccination dangerous? What are the myths of immunization in Moldova?”](#) with Ninel Revenco, University professor, director of the Pediatrics Department, USMF "Nicolae Testemitanu".
- In the context of the National Vaccination Campaign against COVID-19, the MoHLSP, NAPH in partnership with the WHO and UNICEF organized [a SIMULATION EXERCISE of the reception, distribution and administration process of COVID-19 vaccine](#);
- WHO and UNICEF supported the MoHLSP and NAPH in equipping the immunization centers with visuals and information materials, aimed at building confidence about COVID-19 vaccination among the health workers, to be immunized during the first stage of immunization;
- UNICEF with financial support from USAID, supported [an educational webinar with an online-security expert from La Strada](#), covering the topics of online bullying and responding to questions and inquiries from the general public on how to help their children in the new realities of high exposure to online. According to the complaints registered on the siguronline.md portal, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of cyberbullying cases increased by 3 times;
- WHO supported the National Communication Group on COVID-19 to plan next communication activities and to address the raised number of cases and population fatigue. The main message of the next stage of the campaign is focused on the “Virus doesn’t disappear!” syntagm;
- As part of the [EU initiative” Solidarity for Health](#) WHO initiated a collaboration with the [Association of Medical Students and Residents](#) to conduct inter-personal communication sessions on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination in rural areas (open markets, shops entrances, bus stations, etc.). A team of 45 students were trained in prevention of COVID-19 spreading, vaccination and addressing the connected myths to further deliver the information in 15 rayons;
- WHO regularly provides updates on [www.covidinfo.md](#), [regular posts](#) on social media on COVID-19 pandemic, spreading of new virus variants, vaccines roll-out etc.