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Institutul pentru Politici
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Research. Empowerment. Advocacy.
THE ACTION TANK



Institutional Development Strategy 2020-2025

Action Plan for 2023-2025

Updated: October 2023



#nurăzboiului
Campanie Civică #StopWar





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IPRE'S OVERVIEW

The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE) was established in March 2015 as an independent, non-profit and non-partisan think-tank.

IPRE is one of the leading think-tanks in Moldova promoting European integration, sustainable development, good governance and rule of law Policies, with a proved track-record of monitoring and evaluation of the Eastern Partnership policy, EU-Moldova Association Agreement implementation and facilitating multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, policy development and advocacy activities at the local, national and European levels.

IPRE's portfolio includes over 70 projects implemented in partnership with national, European and transatlantic organizations, including with the support of the UNDP, NATO, OSCE, European Commission, EU member states, the UK, national and international foundations such as the Open Society Foundations, the European Endowment for Democracy, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Hans Seidel Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation. IPRE is member of a series of civil society and think-tank pan-European initiatives, including the EaP Civil Society Forum, the EaP Think Tank Network, OSCE Network of Think Tank and Academic Institutions and cooperates with Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA).

IPRE operates based on the following strategic policy planning document: (1) IPRE's Development Strategy, (2) IPRE's Communication and Visibility Strategy and the (3) Operational Policies Manual that provides in addition to the Statute more detailed rules and in-house policies of organizational operation.

IPRE's Mission is to accelerate the European integration of the Moldova by promoting systemic reforms, enhancing participatory democracy and strengthening the role of citizens in national and local decision-making processes.

Thematic areas:

IPRE activities and expertise are covering the following **8 thematic areas of intervention**:

- European integration;
- Foreign and security policy;
- Justice reform and fight against corruption;
- Public administration reform;
- Trade, economic development and sustainable energy;
- Digital transformation;
- Social inclusion and minorities integration;
- Youth development.

Objectives

In order to implement its Mission, IPRE has the following **core activity objectives**:

- (1) Conduct research, public policy development and monitoring of the key areas of transformation as provided by the EU accession process and the EU-Moldova Association Agreement;
- (2) Promote research and public policy products on the local, national and European levels, including through advocacy actions, building and participating in thematic non-governmental coalitions;
- (3) Empower youth and local media aiming to promote civic engagement and participatory democracy.



Priorities

Following the mid-term review of IPRE's Development Strategy, from October 2023, given the perspectives of the EU accession negotiations process, the challenges and opportunities of the changing security environment and need to enhance Moldova's internal and external resilience the following **six key priorities** will guide IPRE's activity **during 2023 – 2025**:

1. **Support and advance Moldova's EU accession process** in particular via the #ThinkTanks4EUMembership and #CivilSociety4EuropeanIntegration initiatives.
2. **Contribute to securing the integrity, efficiency and independence of the justice and anticorruption system** in Moldova via the #Justice4Moldova and #CivilSociety4Integrity initiatives.
3. **Support the implementation of Moldova's public administration reform on the central and local levels**, including by advancing **digital transformation** process.
4. Contribute to the implementation of Moldova's **reintegration and security policies**.
5. **Accelerating the digital transformation process of Moldova** by promoting digital identity and digital services at the national level and in the diaspora.
6. **Empower and support youth and young professionals** in public policies by implementing training, internship and fellowship programs.












OUR BOARD

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OUR TEAM

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 <p>Dr. Dumitru Mînzărari Security Policy Expert</p>	 <p>Dumitru Vicol Financial and banking policy expert</p>	 <p>Victor Guzun, Digital Policy Expert</p>
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IPRE'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2020-2025

I. PROMOTE THE EUROPEANISATION PROCESS OF THE MOLDOVA

With the signing of the Association Agreement, Moldova was set on the European path by tighter political association and deeper economic convergence with the EU. Moldova was no longer alone in the face of internal and external challenges, anchoring itself to the common values with the European Union, such as democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance, market economy and sustainable development.

The EU is the main trading partner of Moldova. Over 2/3 of Moldovan exports are heading to the EU market and almost 50 per cent of imports are coming from the EU. To date, more than 45 per cent of the EU's acquis has been transposed into the Moldovan normative framework. Moldova has become more competitive on the EU's market. The main beneficiary of the DCFTA is the agri-food sector, which is where we have seen the strongest export growth. The Association Agreement has a much stronger impact on the industrial sector, which was liberalised. Thus, the Agreement has been of great benefit to the national economy. After 9 years, the figures are impressive. Nine years after the introduction of the visa free regime with the EU, over 2.5 million Moldovan citizens travelled at least 3 times to the EU and other European countries. The cooperation in the field of foreign policy and security has deepened but requires a new impetus and cooperation.

On the 23rd of June 2022, Moldova has been granted EU candidate status. This historical decision came just three months after the Moldovan government signed the EU membership application. The context of granting the EU candidate status for Chisinau was shaped by three key factors: repercussions of the Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine, Moldova's ambitious reform agenda, promoted by the current pro-European government, and the increased sectorial cooperation between Moldova and EU after the signing of the Association Agreement in 2014. The unanimous endorsement among member states for Moldova's membership perspective provides new opportunities for enhanced EU – Moldova relations, focused on meeting all the accession criteria and bring palpably benefits for Moldovan people.

With view of completing 9 steps recommended by the European Commission, Moldova is expected to start accession negotiations with the EU pending a decision by the European Council in December 2023. Moldovan Government is updating the institutional and strategic policy planning process to engage into accession negotiations process with the EU. Civil society also plays a crucial role by monitoring and contributing with expertise and policy advice to this process. IPRE in this regard is among the leading Moldovan think-tanks.

Against this background, IPRE will focus on advancing the EU accession negotiations and will continue to monitor of the AA/DCFTA implementation, with a particular attention on the EU-Moldova political dialogue in the area of foreign and security policy, implementation of key systemic reforms in the area of good governance, justice, integrity, economic and sector cooperation. Communication and raising awareness on EU accession and the implementation of the AA/DCFTA remains key. Finally, IPRE will continue to make full use of its monitoring, research and policy proposals in the context of EU accession negotiations and the implementation of the AA/DCFTA in its relations and advocacy activities with Moldovan authorities, EU institutions and EU Member States. These activities became and will remain the core area of IPRE's activities, as we believe that proper implementation of the AA/DCFTA and meaningful EU accession negotiations process with active contribution of Moldovan civil society and think-tanks represent and important added-value to the implementation of the key goal to make Moldova ready for accession to the EU by 2030.



II. CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CIVIC ACTIVISM AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

In order to create a proper environment in Moldova to secure sustainable transformation it is crucial to foster civic participation in the process of policy development and to raise the level of involvement of the citizens in solving issues that they are confronted with in their local communities. Therefore, IPRE has been actively involved in supporting community development, civic engagement and participatory democracy on the national and local levels. Thus, IPRE facilitated the creation of Local Participatory Councils in over 25 localities from Moldova, encouraging and supporting implementation of local projects, developed public policy proposals in close consultation with citizens on the local level and key national stakeholders, created networks of volunteers. IPRE contributes to empowerment of local CSOs and LPAs from 25 localities in ensuring more transparent, inclusive and sustainable budgetary processes at the local level.

At the same time, IPRE has supported through its projects youth empowerment via thematic Summer Schools, reanimation of the Debating culture in local schools, promoting critical thinking among youth via participatory democracy programs. IPRE is also active in empowering and training of journalists in particular from local and regional media. IPRE has launched two youth development programs (Internship and Fellowship). Thus, in order to support the implementation of the first IPRE strategic priority, during the next years IPRE will continue to focus further expanding the programs of empowerment of youth, local and grassroots CSOs, local and regional mass-media.

III. STRENGTHEN IPRE'S THINK-TANK CAPACITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY BRIDGING, ON THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS.

One of the strongest areas of IPRE's expertise is the European integration of Moldova. The expertise comes from the academic and governmental background of IPRE's members and experts. The expertise is further strengthened by a broader perspective on European integration that goes beyond the policy level to a practical level, implementing special training programmes and campaigns for local CSO's, national minorities, youth and media.

In the short and medium term, we aim to strengthen our institutional capacities and expertise of IPRE's experts through training programs and the exchange of best practices at national and European level. Between 2023 and 2026, IPRE will participate in an academic mobility program in 13 universities and think-tanks in Europe, South America and Asia. Also, in the coming years, IPRE experts will participate in training programs on subjects related to accession negotiations, policies and institutional mechanisms of the EU, in order to contribute as actively as possible to the advancement of Moldova's EU accession process.



SWOT ANALYSIS OF IPRE'S CURRENT CAPACITIES:

Strengths:

- Credible reference centre for journalists, local and international experts, government and local officials, ambassadors and international development partners, as well as EU institutions on issues related to Moldova's internal developments;
- One of the leading non-government organisations with evidence-based opinions and expertise related to issues of European integration, Foreign Policy and internal transformation in Moldova;
- IPRE is an active member of CSO's platforms on the national, EaP and EU levels;
- Experts with strong academic profile in public administration, national and EU law, international relations;
- Experts with strong professional experience in government, international organisations, national and international consultancy;

Weakness:

- Think-tank research work component is not the main type of IPRE's activity;
- Internal and external review and editing of IPRE's paper is done on ad-hoc basis;
- High dependency on donor support to implement IPRE's objectives. Short-term funds availability. Majority of the grants implemented by IPRE are not exceeding 12 months.
- Insufficient interaction with all Board members in planning and defining IPRE's strategic priorities.

Opportunities:

- Bridging with partner think-tanks from EU, Moldova, Western Balkans and other candidate countries on issues related to Europeanisations process;
- Availability of funding from the EU, EU Member States and other donor community representatives to develop NGO and think-capacities;
- Implementation of the Association Agreement and key systemic reform will remain one of the main priorities of EU-Moldova relations.

Threats:

- The volatility of the security environment at the regional level and the increased security risks for Moldova.



ACTION PLAN 2023 – 2025

I. PROMOTE THE EUROPEANISATION PROCESS IN MOLDOVA

Objectives:

1. Contribute to the accession negotiations with the EU by participating in working groups, formulation of opinions, monitoring the implementation of benchmarks, conduct advocacy and multistakeholder dialogues in partnership with other think-tanks and civil society organisations as part of the #ThinkTanks4EUMembership and #CivilSociety4EuropeanIntegration initiatives.
2. Monitoring of the implementation of the AA/DCFTA;
3. Address the need for implementation by Moldovan authorities of key systemic reforms provided by the EU accession negotiations process and in the AA/DCFTA by research, policy proposals and advocacy efforts in Moldova and EU Member States.
4. Raise awareness in Moldovan society on the importance of the EU accession negotiations and AA/DCFTA implementation.
5. Contribute to strengthening capacities of Moldovan civil society and public servants in the context of advancing accessions negotiations with the EU.

Activities 2023 – 2025

The abovementioned objectives shall be implemented through projects designed to further develop research, analytical, advocacy capacities of IPRE executive team and IPRE's associated experts, focusing in particular on:

- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Moldova's commitments in the context of accession negotiations and implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.
- Conducting research and policy analysis on key reform areas as provided by the EU accession negotiations chapters and EU – Moldova Association Agreement.
- Organising public events, seminars and conferences in Moldova, in particular outside Chisinau about the state of play of implementation of accession negotiations with the EU and implementation of the EU-Moldova AA/DCFTA objectives.
- Developing advocacy and policy partnerships on the Europeanisation processes with Think-Tanks from the EU, Moldova and other EU candidate countries.
- Conducting advocacy visits and organising events in Brussels and other EU capitals (i.e. Berlin, Paris, Rome and Hague) about Moldova's EU accession negotiations process.
- Supporting Moldovan CSOs and public authorities in the process of EU accession negotiations and promoting the implementation of AA/DCFTA in key areas, and providing policy advice;
- Organising workshops and trainings for Youth, local CSOs and local Media about the EU-Moldova relations, accession negotiations and the AA/DCFTA implementation.
- Participating and contributing with research and policy analysis in national, regional and European CSO and think-tank platforms and coalitions.
- Participating with contributions/interviews in Moldovan, regional and European mass-media about EU-Moldova relations, the process of European integration.
- Conduct national public opinion polls on EU integration.
- Develop and implement training programs on EU accession negotiations for Moldovan civil society and public servants.

Expected results:

- AA/DCFTA implementation and EU accession negotiations advanced with the participation of more active and engaged Moldovan civil society mobilised with IPRE's expert contribution.
- Advocacy and policy partnerships enlarged with think-tanks from the EU, Moldova and other EU candidate countries aimed at promoting enlargement process.
- Better informed public opinion, mass-media and international development partners about state of play and key priorities in EU accession negotiations and implementation of AA/DCFTA objectives in Moldova;



- Increased IPRE's analytical support and advice provided to Moldova's CSOs and public authorities in the implementation of key areas of accession negotiations process and AA/DCFTA;
- Improved level of understanding of youth, local CSOs and local media about the European integration process.
- Improved IPRE's perspectives with regional and European expertise on Moldova's EU accession process.
- Increased outreach of IPRE's analysis on Moldova's EU accession process.
- Enhanced capacities of Moldova's civil society and public servants on EU accession negotiations.

Indicators

- Yearly Shadow Progress Reports on the implementation of the EU accession process and implementation of EU-Moldova AA/DCFTA issued;
- Number of policy papers on EU accession process, EU assistance to support implementation of AA/DCFTA and on key areas of reform in particular as refers to the Fundamentals cluster of accession negotiations, public administration reform, justice and anticorruption, foreign policy and security, reintegration and conflict settlement, DCFTA implementation, digital transformation, regional development and infrastructure issued;
- Number of policy briefs/memos/ per year on key areas of implementation of the reform agenda of the Government in the context of EU accession negotiations, AA/DCFTA, foreign policy and security, reintegration and conflict settlement, digital transformation prepared and distributed to key stakeholders from Moldova and EU institutions;
- Number of advocacy visits on Moldova's accession process organized in EU capitals by IPRE and partner Think-tanks from the EU;
- Number of return advocacy visit and events in Moldova organized for experts representing EU think-tanks;
- Number of public events on the implementation of EU integration process of Moldova.
- Number of pod-casts, radio, tv, online outlets and videos on EU accession negotiations, AA/DCFTA, foreign policy and security, reintegration and conflict settlement, digital transformation issued.
- Number of multi-stakeholder policy dialogues on EU accession negotiations, AA/DCFTA, justice and anticorruption, foreign policy and security, reintegration and conflict settlement, digital transformation organized.
- Number of training programs on EU accession negotiations implemented for Moldova's civil society an public servants.

II. CONTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Objectives

1. Contribute to the development of civic engagement and of grass root civil society actively involved in policy and decision making which promotes and monitors transparency and accountability of public institutions on local and national levels;
2. Empower youth to become better informed and more active in community development and participative democracy both on the local and national levels;
3. Fostering an inclusive dialogue between citizens, ethnic communities, local and national public authorities on common local and national issues of key importance for the sustainable development of Moldova.

Activities 2023 – 2025

Since its foundation, IPRE has paid particular attention to supporting community development, citizens' empowerment, youth and local media development. The abovementioned objectives are



aiming to build-on the existing activities and complementing the realisation of IPRE's first strategic priority by creating medium to long term conditions for the sustainability of the Europeanisation process in Moldova. In this regards IPRE will undertake the following actions:

- Increase the number of youth initiatives by creating a community of proactive young leaders from small towns of Moldova, actively participating in the life of their communities and decision making processes on the local, regional and national levels.
- Train young members of the society, in particular on the local level, by empowering them in critical and judgmental thinking in order to become more active and better informed about the reform agenda, social and political life in Moldova.
- Empower local media to become more efficient, independent and sustainable players on the national mass-media market of Moldova, by strengthening their institutional, professional and marketing capacities, as well as by bridging them with other regional and national broadcasters in development and broadcast of local media content that addresses outstanding issues of local relevance on the national level.
- Promote a societal dialogue among the members of ethnic communities, linguistic minorities, local CSO's, academic and expert community, local and national public authorities to discuss elements and solutions that could contribute to an increased social cohesion in Moldova.

Expected results

- Increased number of youth civic initiatives on the local and national levels.
- Enhanced capacities of young members of the society on the local level involved in the community development, civic engagement and participation in social and political life in Moldova on the local level.
- Strengthened proactive cooperation and dialogue between citizens, CSOs, local public authorities, stimulating the creation of efficient partnerships.
- Strengthened capacities of local and grass-roots CSOs actively involved in policy and decision making, which promotes and monitors transparency and accountability of local and national public authorities.
- Improved capacities of local media to produce local media content and interact with other national TV broadcasters.
- Increased relevance of IPRE in promoting open discussions and policy recommendations to national and international stakeholders in solving outstanding issues related to the social cohesion, diversity and identity in the context of Europeanisations process of the Moldova.

Indicators

- Number of civic initiatives and policy proposals promoted by young people at local and national level.
- Number of local CSOs actively involved in the monitoring and decision-making process, as result of the capacity building activities implemented by IPRE.
- Number of initiatives promoted and implemented by local CSOs.
- Number of media institutions participating in the training, exchange of good practices and professional qualification activities organized by IPRE.
- Number of partnerships developed by IPRE with media institutions at local, national and European level.
- Number of media appearances of IPRE in local, national and European media outlets.
- Number of public events/discussions and policy recommendations related to increasing the dialogue, social cohesion, diversity and identity in the context of the Europeanization process of Moldova.



III. STRENGTHEN IPRE'S THINK-TANK CAPACITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY BRIDGING, ON THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS.

Objectives

1. Strengthen IPRE's organisational and institutional capacities.
2. Improve IPRE's research, policy development and advocacy capacities to move gradually from a 'policy hybrid' non-government organisation to a well-established think-tank.
3. Develop policy and advocacy partnerships with partner EU think-tanks.
4. Enhance research, policy development and advocacy capacities of IPRE's experts and researchers.
5. Increase the outreach and advocacy of IPRE's research and policy documents to the national and regional levels, as well as to EU institutions and targeted EU member states.

Activities 2023 – 2025

- Updated and implement IPRE's Operational Policies Manual.
- Updated and implement Human Resources IPRE's policy, including by implementing a basic organisational salary scheme based on performance and volume of work within IPRE's Executive and Management team.
- Enhance the role of IPRE Board in strategic development and oversight over IPRE management and activities and improve interaction between the Board and IPRE management and executive team.
- Improve project management, fundraising and communication skills of IPRE's Executive and management team.
- Enlarge the network of IPRE associate experts and researchers.
- Develop and implement exchange internships, fellowships and research partnerships between IPRE and think-tanks from the EU, Moldova and other EU candidate countries focused on research, policy development and advocacy activities.
- Organise regular advocacy visits by IPRE experts to the EU institutions and targeted EU Member States, as well as return advocacy visits and events in Moldova for EU experts and researchers.
- Improve quality control and peer-review of IPRE's research and policy documents.
- Implement IPRE's Communication Strategy adopted in 2020-2025.

Expected results

- Improved IPRE's Operational Policies.
- Increased research advocacy and project management activities of IPRE.
- Improved and regularised external auditing process.
- Trained personnel on project management and fundraising, communications and presentation, research and policy development skills.
- Enhanced peer-review mechanism to improve quality control of IPRE documents.
- Implemented exchange internships, fellowships and research partnerships with EU-based think-tanks.
- Increased relevance of IPRE's research and policy proposals to the decisions of the national authorities (Parliament, Government) and policy makers from Moldova and EU capitals.

Indicators

- IPRE's Operational Policies Manual implemented and updated as a result of the external audit report and IPRE's needs and capacities assessment if and where necessary;
- At least two external Audit of IPRE performed;
- Research and advocacy partnerships extended with think-tanks from the EU and candidate countries created;
- IPRE experts participated in at least 6 research mobilities and/or exchange internship, fellowship and research partnerships;



- At least three training sessions in project management and fundraising, communication and presentation, enhancing research and policy development skills, implemented for IPRE experts.
- An improved mechanism for reviewing and evaluating the quality control of documents developed and published by IPRE.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND MITIGATION

The following risks may have a negative impact on the implementation of IPRE's Development Strategy:

- Increasing control of political and economic groups over state institutions and media, thus endangering the Europeanisation process in Moldova;
- Decreasing interest from the main development partners to further support an ambitious transformation agenda in Moldova;
- Worsening environment for CSO's and think-tanks in Moldova;

IPRE's risk mitigations strategy will be aimed to:

- Strengthen partnerships with other Moldovan, regional and European think-tanks to enhance advocacy, research and policy development capacities;
- Further develop contacts and cooperation with EU and other development partners;
- Ensure communication and open networking links with all political parties and associations of ethnic communities from Moldova;
- Strengthen IPRE's profile as an independent, evidence-based, unbiased and non-partisan policy contributor.

The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE) is an independent, apolitical and non-profit think-tank from Moldova, founded in 2015 by a team of national and international experts, former civil servants and career diplomats.

IPRE is one of the leading Moldovan think-tanks focused on European Integration, sustainable development, good governance and rule of law, becoming a relevant center for research, multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy development at central and regional level through empowering various actors, in particular young people, media, local CSOs and local public authorities.

IPRE's portfolio includes over 70 projects implemented in partnership with national, European and transatlantic organizations, including with the support of UNDP, NATO, OSCE, European Commission, EU Member States, UK, national and international foundations, such as Open Society Foundation, Soros Foundation Moldova, European Endowment for Democracy, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Hans Seidel Stiftung and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

IPRE's vision is that Moldova's European integration is key to ensure a sustainable transformation of the country.



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