



GENDERDOC-M

REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF LGBT PEOPLE'S RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA YEAR 2019

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This report reflects the situation on respect of LGBT people's rights, as well as the political and social influence on these people, such as homo- and transphobia in society, yet also the positive change for LGBT people from the Republic of Moldova.

The year 2019 prolonged the period of political instability within which three Governmental formations were assembled, and a change of power in the Parliament occurred. In February, the parliamentary elections took place, which brought opposing parties to the Parliament but also an increase in the number of seats for the socialists.

In the autumn, local elections for the position of Chişinău's mayor were held. For the first time in history, the post of mayor of Chişinău municipality went to a representative of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), a party that made multiple homophobic statements and promises.

2019 has also brought more power to the president of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon, the informal leader of PSRM, who declared in 2018 that he is not a president of LGBT people.

On the other hand, Moldovan society seems to be shifting to a more tolerant attitude towards the LGBT community. A [study](#) conducted by the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, published in 2019, shows a decrease of social distance from LGBT people from 5.2 in 2015 (accepting as a country's visitor) to 4.4 in 2018 (accepting as a state citizen). Given the mentioned points, the LGBT community remains the least accepted out of all minorities. Social distance between LGBT people and other marginalised groups has demonstrated the following indicators: Romani have shown a coefficient of 5.9; Gagauzians – 4.55; Bulgarians - 4.19; people with disabilities – 4.04; refugees – 3.33; non-Orthodox Christians – 2.72, and agnostics/atheists – 1.96.

In the study mentioned above, LGBT people were assigned more negative qualifiers, in bigger volume. This group of people is perceived as abnormal by 40% of the general population, as observed during the group discussions.

The majority of respondents of the study implied that LGBT people should be discriminated against, it was also said about Romani, and representatives of minority religions. More than a half of general population considers that LGBT people must be stripped of the following rights on: adopting a child (71%), marriage (66%), and organising public events (66%). Fewer people have stated that homosexual relationships should be penalised (38%), and that with the Republic of Moldova Joining the EU, the number of LGBT people will have grown (37%). Around a third of the respondents believe that LGBT people are sick and are in need of medical

help, are often carriers of HIV/have AIDS, and that they must have access to the benefits and services of specialised institutions. More men (39%) than women (30%) think that homosexual people are sick – they are not aware of what they are doing, and they need medical help.

At the end of 2019, the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre ordered a study at the marketing and social research company, Magenta Consulting, to measure Chişinău citizens' perception of the LGBT community.

To the question: „What is your attitude to LGBT people (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people)?” 2% have responded with „very positive”; 5% - „somewhat positive”; 37% - „neutral”; 21% - „somewhat negative”; 34% - „very negative”; 1% refrained from answering.

To the question: „What are the first things that come to your mind when you hear the term „LGBT people?” - 8% have answered with „respect, support, admiration”; 46% – „indifference, confusion, pity, misfortune, patience, tolerance”; 69% a – „antipathy, disgust, abnormality, disease”.

To the question whether same-sex marriage should or should not be legalised in Moldova, the answers were: 5% - yes; 65% - no; 14% - no opinion; 15% were indifferent.

To the request: „Please, tell me, which of the following rights do you think should LGBT people have?” the responses were: 63% - „To exist on the country's territory”; 69% - „To do whatever they want, at home, however, as long as nobody sees them”; „To hold hands in public places” – 18%; „To kiss in public places” – 4%; „To organise public events” – 18%.

At the same time, 71% of the respondents consider that there exists discrimination against LGBT people in Moldova.

The GENDERDOC-M Information Centre keeps monitoring press from the Republic of Moldova on topics that would be related to the LGBT community. In 2019, there were 750 materials monitored (273 in Russian language and 477 in Romanian), among which, 31 materials had a positive tone (6 in Russian, 15 in Romanian); 127 with a negative connotation (73 in Russian, 54 in Romanian), and 592 with a neutral overtone (194 in Russian, 398 in Romanian). The percent of materials with positive and neutral overtones is 83% (73% in Russian, 87% in Romanian). The results have demonstrated a small increase in neutral and positive materials, from 79% in 2018 to 83% in 2019. Still, there are more materials with a negative connotation in Russian rather Romanian, with a difference of 14%.

MASS-MEDIA coverage of the „I'm OK” Pride March

Mediacritica, a portal of media education, published a survey with the title: [the Family March and the “I'm OK” Solidarity March, or how some media institutions use „traditional” and „less traditional” events to capitalise on certain political parties.](#)

The survey has demonstrated the following:

Context: On May 18th, 2019, the „Silence March” took place in Chişinău, to support traditional family (the Family March). The event was organised by Moldovan Archdiocese, and among the participants, which were carrying pro-family slogans and slogans against homosexuality, representatives of Orthodox clergy, Orthodox activists and citizens from other districts of the country were present. President Igor Dodon was also present at the March with his family. The mass set off from Ciuflea Monastery towards the Cathedral Square, where metropolitan Vladimir and the state's chief gave speeches.

On the second day, May 19th, the „I'm OK” Solidarity March also took place in Chişinău, organised by the LGBTQI community. The manifestants marched down the capital's Bucureşti Street, demonstrating messages for the development of tolerance and diversity in society, as well as unity and self-acceptance. This year, as well, a group of traditional family

supporters were counter demonstrating. To assure public order, a big number of police officers accompanied the marching.

Both marches – the Family one and the one organised by the LGBTQI community – were associated with certain political parties by some media institutions. Thus, if Prime TV and Canal 3 used the „I’m OK” Solidarity March to discredit and put some PAS (Party of Action and Solidarity) representatives (Maia Sandu și Dumitru Alaiba) in a negative light, NTV Moldova and Accent TV used the Family March to put president Igor Dodon in a positive light (and, by extension, the Party of Socialists of the Republic Moldova). Other media institutions covered both events in a way that lacked impartiality, even discriminatory at times (Sputnik.md, Kp.md), making use of a mixture of facts with opinions, and/or irony.

Prime TV covered the event of May 19th, 2019 the „I’m Ok” Solidarity March with a bit of news aired within the informational newsletter of the same day. Prime TV presented the information in a neutral manner, however at the end of the report there was admitted a case of manipulation (suggestion technique), through the inclusion of irrelevant information mentioning that: „...*last March, in a similar event, PAS leader, Maia Sandu, also took part*”. Given that such events (those that are related to the LGBTQI community) are perceived in an exclusively negative context by the majority of the Moldovan population, the media institution tried to suggest that PAS leader is a member of the community, and thus – to transfer the negative social image of a social group onto a politician.

Canal 3 aired news about both of the marches, the Family and the Solidarity „I’m OK” ones. In [one of the reports](#), **Canal 3**, just like **Prime TV**, allowed the **suggestion technique** as a manipulative process: „*In solidarity with the representatives of the LGBT community also stands PAS president, Maia Sandu. On March 8th, 2018, she participated in a march for their rights. And in autumn 2016, the leader of a well-known organisation promoting rights of sexual minorities urged homosexuals and lesbians to vote for Maia Sandu at the presidential elections.*” (**transfer of the negative image** included).

PRO TV Chișinău covered both of the events, [one in the May 18th newsletter](#) and the other one on the second day, May 19th. In both cases, **PRO TV Chișinău** presented the information in an unbiased way, neutrally and veraciously, not allowing manipulative techniques or infringements of any deontological norms.

Following the same manner, – a neutral and unbiased one, not allowing deontological infringements and/or techniques of manipulation – **TV8** reported on the [Family March](#) and the [„I’m OK” Solidarity March](#).

Moldova 1 reported on both events in ”Messenger” from May [18th](#) and [19th](#), 2019, also in a neutral and impartial manner.

Televiziunea Centrală (Orhei) and **Jurnal TV** did not cover any of the marches in their newsletters in the period of 18-20th of May 2019, which can be qualified as **oversight**.

NTV Moldova referred to both events in the [newsletter](#) of May 20th, although in a biased, prejudiced way. For instance, while both reports on the Family March the airtime consisted of 7 minutes, the „I’m OK” Solidarity March had only 1:40 minutes allocated. **NTV Moldova** politicised both events, presenting Igor Dodon and the representatives of PSRM in an exclusively positive context, while other parties – PAS and its representatives – appeared in an exclusively negative one.

- **A mixture of facts and opinions:** „... they were praying and carrying messages against the sin of homosexuality”;
- **Biased and ironic titles:** „Side-to-side with LGBT” (orig. „ÎN PAS CU LGBT”);
- **Transfer of the negative image.** NTV Moldova tried to suggest (**suggestion technique**) that such events (organised by the LGBTQI community) are perceived very negatively by the society from the Republic of Moldova, later insisting that ACUM block’s representatives (Dumitru Alaiba and Maia Sandu) participate in them, which is somewhat repulsive in the whole society’s opinion. In case of the „I’m OK” Solidarity March, NTV Moldova reported the information approximately in the same way and following the same scenario as **Prime TV** and **Canal 3**.
- **Impartiality of the sources and biased reporting.** If in the Family March’s case NTV Moldova included interviews with participants and organizers of this event, in the „I’m OK” Solidarity March’s the whole report was based on paraphrasing of the interviews and information by the journalists, without any direct source or interviewed person indicated.
- [In the main newsletter](#) from May 20th 2019, **Accent TV** only covered the Family March, in the same way and following the same scenario as **NTV Moldova**.

On May 18h, **Sputnik.md** published an article about the [Family March](#) and, on May 17th, another about the [„I’m OK” Solidarity March](#). **Sputnik.md** used pejorative and discriminatory lexicon, allowing value judgements, such as: „*Homosexual March in the centre of the capital: The police comes with a subpoena*”; „*If there is no love, there is nothing*”, said *Marin Preda in his novel „The Most Beloved of Earthlings*”. *The famous Romanian writer referred to pure and unconditional love between a man and a woman, which perfects the human being and offers the continuation of life*”.

Kp.md has published three materials about these two events. One of them is a [report on the funding of the „LGBT community from the Republic of Moldova](#)” (in the march’s context) but the text is not tagged correspondingly (as a news bit, an opinion article, or a report) and abounds in value judgements, mixture of facts with opinions, and irony. Another news bit published by **Kp.md** was about the [Family March](#) with an announcement that Igor Dodon was going to take part in it. In addition, the third report was about the [„I’m OK” Solidarity March](#) and about „*Maia Sandu participating in the LGBT march in 2018*” with the information taken from **Publika.md** (which is a fake and is related to the technique of suggestive manipulation and negative image transfer).

Unimedia.info has published five news materials/reports about the two events. The portal presented the information in a neutral and impartial manner, without any breaches of deontological norms and without resorting to manipulative techniques.

HATE-MOTIVATED SPEECH, HATRED INSTIGATION, AND DISCRIMINATION

During three months of monitorisation by the [PromoLex Association](#) (11.01.19 – 11.04.19), there were identified and reported three cases related to different kinds of speech: verbal expressions, written opinions, images, video sequences, speeches held at public events, placards, social network posts. According to the [report](#), even if hatred and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity fell by about 30% compared to 2018, the LGBT group remains among the most affected groups against which some of the most aggressive and violent speeches were made, much more aggressive than the ones that affected women. This rhetoric is largely caused by prejudices, catalysed by conservative religious and sometimes even radical speeches about family and traditional values, sin and immorality. This rhetoric is largely promoted

in two dimensions. On the political dimension, hate speech is used as a tool of manipulation, denigration and ridiculing of opponents, generation of false problems and threats, and empowering of some social groups on the account of others. On the religious conservatism dimension, aggressive messages and information about homosexuals and transgender people are promoted intensely, largely associating them with amorality, paedophilia, abnormality and sin.

Religious portals keep publishing aggressive and discriminatory materials addressed to LGBT people, associating them with the most negative events and phenomena. On 01.02.2019, apărătorul.md portal published an article titled [„The demonising of this world... does human perversity have limits? Meet the doghuman!”](#). The original article has a satiric basis about people, who identify as dogs, which, however, was translated without keeping the humorous component. Therefore, it would look as a new danger for humankind – the emergence of dog-people, who are associated with LGBT people: *„Slovakian press announces: A new kind of LGBT has appeared in the Great Britain – the dog human. Those say they see themselves as dogs, and they refuse to be addressed to as human beings. In this context, it is very possible that mass-media from everywhere will be writing enthusiastically about the parade of dog people in some years, just like they write nowadays about so-called «equality parade» of homosexual perverts.”* The article dehumanises and ridicules LGBT people and solidarity parades traditionally organised every year.

On 16.02.2019, the apărătorul.md portal published an article titled [„France prohibits teaching staff from using words „father” and „mother” during class hours, in order not to offend homosexuals”](#). The article distortedly presents a news material about a French legislative initiative to introduce the terms „parent 1” and „parent 2” in official acts in some circumstances. These circumstances refer to the families with same-sex parents, starting from the recital that, in France, it had been several years since same-sex marriage was legalised. The article distorts the original material, calling to ridicule and prejudice towards LGBT people, moreover, presenting the initiative as a threat from the side of homosexual people, even though the content is telling about a legislative accord, using a suggestive image in this meaning.

The Flux.md portal, published an article on 13.03.2019, telling the story of Alfred Kinsey, who, according to the authors, would be the parent of sex education. The article titled [„Sex education and its «father». Alfred Kinsey, a psychopath, a sado-masochist, bisexual, pedophile rapist”](#), draws denigrating parallels between sex education, amorality, LGBT, and pedophilia. On 23.03.2019, the „March for Life – unique from the very first second” took place, which represented an event of pro-life (anti-abortion) manifestation. [One of the March’s participants has declared:](#) *„In Christian family, the man should form a family with his wife. Not man-with-man, woman-with-woman. May there not be such aberrations of this kind. They are mentally ill people and need to be treated”*. Another participant has supported that homosexuality cannot be allowed because we are not in the Netherlands. He proclaimed the following about Dutch men: *„The majority are faggots (...) I think I would set their house on fire, (...) if it is a person of the good orientation, well, I’ll make friends with them. But if they are, pardon my language, faggots, I won’t even be their neighbour.”*

On 23.01.2019, the Telegraph.md portal published an article with the suggestive title [“A deputy and a municipal councillor from PSRM caught taking a bath in the same tub? There supposedly was another man with them”](#). The title is an allusion to the fact that PSRM counsellors are of homosexual orientation. Although the fact of sexual orientation itself is not hate speech, the way the news is played out, the homophobic overtone and the use of homosexuality as a negative element of association to denigrate the representatives of political parties could be qualified as incitement to discrimination.

The Flux.md portal, in a [news release](#) dated 17.01.2019, ridicules relations between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un by associating them with LGBT people. Although the news talks about a possible meeting and the diplomatic relations between the two leaders, the picture calls for stereotypes and prejudices.

On the Facebook page "Times New Moldovan", during the election campaign, several homophobic images were published. The images used prejudices related to LGBT people and the negative perception of this group in society to ridicule or defame some politicians, activists or political supporters. This page was later deleted by the Facebook administration.

During the [electoral debates](#) of 30.01.2019, the candidate of the PSRM, Alexandr Usatîi, mentioned: *"On May 9th, all the progressive humanity in the world celebrates the day of liberation from the fascist plague... well, you want to push us into something again, we will be celebrating Europe Day, and here are the gay parades that you will arrange for us on this day (...)"*.

Later, the AIF.md portal published a news article titled: ["Shall you arrange a gay parade on Victory Day, as well?: Alexandr Usatîi lectured a democrat in Bălţi"](#).

In the show ["Electoral debates - Choose freely with Mariana Rață"](#) of 14.02.2019, responding to a statement of a political opponent that he would be a homosexual, the electoral contestant Ilie Crețu declared: *"I am ready to undergo a lie detector test, here on your set, to show you that I have a normal, healthy, traditional orientation, but at the same time I challenge Mr. Batrîncea and Odnostalco to also pass this test and then we will see on whose side is the non-traditional orientation."*

In a live broadcast from 15.02.19, on his Facebook page, Renato Usatîi [said](#): *"When two men kiss, it's disgusting, you have to agree, and when two blonde [girls] kiss, a blonde with a brunette and so on, it is no longer so, heaven forbid, terrifying."*

Also Renato Usatîi, during the Skype interview on the TV show ["Диалог"](#) from BTV, said about the political opponents of the PSRM: *"When they stick together, this pink with blue, they will shine a single colour, light blue (translation note: Rus. "голубой" which is pejorative for "gay"), you understand? Therefore, he is friends with Kirkorov, and the colour of their disposition is blue (...)"*.

These forms of expression are based on the intention to ridicule and denigrate political opponents, by appealing to the strong prejudices in society towards LGBT people, and as a result, they increase the degree of intolerance towards them.

Hate speech towards LGBT people is a tool used by politicians for manipulation, a call to hostile attitude towards them to promote prejudice, to attack and denigrate political opponents, thus perpetuating the high degree of intolerance towards these people in society. On the other hand, in the dimension of religious conservatism, aggressive messages and information are promoted intensely towards homosexual and transgender people, in large part, associating them with amorality, pedophilia, abnormality and sin.

The civic and religious activist, Ghenadie Valuță, in a [press conference](#) of 12.02.2019, commented on the wave of dissatisfaction that appeared in the public space after taking a picture with a sick old woman, describing it as a campaign of denigration: *"The media serves the non-traditional forces, which feed these media sources, in different ways (...) I tell you, I am the victim of a denigration campaign, based on which the pro-homosexual forces and mentalities (...)"*

are to discredit me in this way because I am a public person who represents the anti-sodomite forces in the country, and on the other hand, the pro-Orthodox forces (...) sexual minorities have distorted the message in the photograph and they have infected the online and media space with the idea that the grandmother is dying, and the reverend is taking selfies with that."

Also Ghenadie Valuță, on the day of the parliamentary elections (24.02.2019), published a [post](#) that incites hatred towards LGBT people: *"We offer to (...) choose anyone, only not those who voted the Anti-Discrimination Law or support the propaganda of homosexuality, or participate in their parades. God in biblical history shows that he endured all sins, except this one. He sent the flood, and burnt the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. So you see that by your vote we are not complicit in this sin and the same consequences ... The Lord's patience has a limit ..."*

The Ungheni Episcopate, for example, posted an [article](#) on their page on 26.02.2019 that talks about self-destruction of people due to the sin of homosexuality: *"We do what God does not favour. For example, to say the name of a sin that is now widespread (and protected by laws) in several countries: homosexuality. I reminded you before the two cities of the Old Testament, Sodom and Gomorrah, where this terrible sin was at great honour; they were burned, there was nothing left of them (...) there are institutions that do not say in the open that their policy is the destruction of humanity, because then no one would listen to them. These institutions lead people to disaster, but they say they lead them to progress and freedom."*

The apărătorul.md page, on 04.02.2019, placed a [news story](#) about a US litigation between a child's parents regarding their gender. The title distorts the essence of the news and promotes intolerance towards LGBT people: *"The Sodomite States of America: a US court has forbidden a father to dress his son in men's clothing."*

In the program „[Let's remember!](#)” from 13.01.2019 from NTV Moldova station, Ghenadie Valuță said: *"Because Herod was a political leader, I want to stop a little on our modern herods, those who promote some anti-Christian laws, they are destroying the future of our children. Look at the Law of the cults, which undermines our ancestral faith and puts it on an equal footing with the cults of others, even with Satanism. Look at the Anti-Discrimination Law, which propagates homosexuality and opens Pandora's Box for the other stages. Are all these not murderous gestures, similar to those of Herod?"*

[PromoLex's report on the August 1st – November 30th period](#) included both general local elections, as well as general developments in society and on the political arena in the Republic of Moldova.

On 13.09.2019, **bloknot-moldova** published an article entitled „(18+) LGBT organisations distribute leaflets with explicit content to students” in which they present false information about the spread of leaflets of sexual character for students. The authors of the article mention: *„The booklets, besides the textual information, contain very explicit thematic images on the use of condoms during sexual intercourse between boys and various methods of preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research issued an order prohibiting political propaganda in educational institutions in the republic and parents' written consent is required for conducting religious lessons in schools and lyceums."* Although the material did not have a sexual subtext, the authors of the article intentionally misrepresented the information and placed it in a negative context, in order to exploit prejudice towards LGBT people. Later, at the request of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre the article was deleted.

Concerning the programs [Talk to Moldova from 05.09.2019](#), there was a discussion about transgender people. Presenter of the show, Natalia Cheptene, in discussion with the mother of program's heroine, asked her: *"So, you didn't ask why she was doing that, why she was dressing like that, why she was trimmed her hair in boys' fashion"*, in her turn, the mother replied: *„Several days ago, when I saw that she's very ill... she has this disease, she needs to see a doctor, to change herself from a girl into a boy"*. Thus, the moderator provoked an intolerant discussion about transgender people, which, at the same time, could cause emotional and psychological pain to the protagonist.

On the 11th of December, an article entitled "[Should Moldova be afraid of "the homosexual dictatorship"?](#)" was published on a new site *noi.md*. The article is manipulative and the main theme is: *"Anyone can be criticised in our culture - the president, the government, the police, the doctors, the teachers, the municipal services... But there is a category, the criticism of which is a kind of taboo. This is about the representatives of the LGBT community. It is enough for a media publication or a particular person to make a critical objection to homosexuals or lesbians, that the publication or person is immediately sued. Even though we are aware of this, we have decided to prepare and publish this article, because we believe that society is entitled to defend its families and traditional values."* The article is followed by a biased and manipulative analysis of the activity of the GENDERDOC-M Centre and LGBT activists. The article seems to have the purpose of arousing negative emotions towards the LGBT organisation and community, exposing them as the enemies of society, family and church.

The most aggressive speeches against LGBT people were caused by politicians. On 09.10.2019, during several meetings with voters and [live](#) interviews on social networks, Renato Usatîi made derogatory statements to political opponents, targeting largely the representatives of PSRM (Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova): *"Țirdea, do you understand that you're not even a moron? You are a such a scumbag that no longer exists on this earth (...). You, the party of homo rainbows, you can't even live a day without a photoshoot (...). There are various creams, lipsticks out there, but I must remind the socialists that they are not supposed to use them (...)."*

On 18.10.2019, during another [live](#) on his Facebook page, Usatîi declared: *"To be brief, they are scammers, charlatans, liars and simply gays (about the PSRM) ..." "We will not allow the rape of Bălți. If we must, I and the inhabitants of Bălți will rape you instead. But we don't need such relationships. Something like this may be accepted for you, but for us in Bălți, an integral traction dominates, not the traction on the back as in your party, so you end these tales..."*

On 24.09.2019, the candidate for the position of the local counsellor in Căușeni, Anatolie Focșa, posted [a message](#) on his Facebook page, using intolerance towards LGBT people and associating them with rapists to denigrate the electoral competitors that represent the ACUM Block. *"After they have decided to promote a homosexual, ACUM (PAS) Căușeni also promotes a rapist who escaped punishment, forgiven by the victim. Homosexuals, rapists, crooks, etc. ACUM, is this your potential?"*

At a [press conference](#) on September 13, 2019, activist Feodor Ghelici, in a speech to President Igor Dodon, said: *"No president of any country visits Putin as often as the president of the Republic of Moldova. Sorry, but the rumours are already circulating that you are in love with Putin. Be careful not to degenerate into gay relationships. We do not exclude this possibility. Over the years in history books will write about the strange love between you (...). Doesn't President Dodon visit President Putin too often? Often, citizens have not very healthy ideas of a homosexual nature ..."*

During the electoral debates of 29.10.2019, the candidate of the PSRM, Ion Ceban, when asked whether or not he will admit, as the mayor, LGBT demonstrations, [he replied](#): *"Do what you want, as long as it does not affect other things. Do what you want at home but not in public, to not disturb the other side of society. I will not authorise the marches. We must respect the wishes of the majority."*

On 02.11.2019, the journalist Mihai Conțiu [published](#) on his Facebook page the message: *"On November 3rd, for the first time in the history of the elections of the mayor of Chișinău, we will have the biggest mobilisation for voting of homosexuals and lesbians as to vote for Andrei Năstase, after Ion Ceban has declared, naturally and manly, that, if elected mayor, he will not issue authorisations for the obscene public demonstrations of this aggressive sexual minority."*

In an article published on the portal [apărătorul.md](#), entitled ["Investigations in Italy: children manipulated into believing they were sexually abused and subsequently sold to foster families"](#), the author writes a series about abused children who are supposed to be manipulated in order to be adopted by same-sex couples.

On the same religious portal, on September 4th, 2019, an article was published that ridicules transgender people: *"Jessica, by the real name of Jonathan, is a biological man in Canada who claims to be a woman (i.e. "transgender"). The individual, who posts on Twitter that he cannot go to the pool because he "has his cycle" and asks girls at puberty how to put his tampon in the vagina, is either a scam or a mentally ill person - or both (...)"*

In an article published on the same portal from September 16th, 2019, entitled *"Sexual minorities from Moldova distributed pornographic materials right in the heart of the capital"*, the author mentions distorted information, as if the representatives of the LGBT community were spreading brochures near the State University of Moldova, and provides false information, as if the brochures having been pornographic in their nature and presenting images of how the "debauchery" between the same-sex people happens.

This form of intolerance is based on the rhetoric of associating the LGBT group with negative events or facts, stimulating prejudices and hostility towards same-sex couples. Distorting facts to present the LGBT community in a bad light is another commonly used way of promoting intolerance.

In a [video blog](#) published by Pastor Vasile Filat on November 21, 2019, he addresses the public with the message that homosexuality is a sin and can lead to paedophilia. "Homosexual animals cannot be compared and are not normal" - says Filat.

When filming the show ["У всех на виду"](#) (Rus. "In front of everyone"), on the CTC TV channel, where the representatives of the GENDERDOC-M Centre were invited, the cameraman commented on the gay participant: "These faggots must be killed, the ambulance must be immediately called for them, to cut their neck." This fact was brought to the attention of the channel administration. They apologised and promised sanctions to the operator.

Cases reported by the beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre

Case 1: On December 1, Ekaterina, a GENDERDOC-M volunteer, called a cab from Yandex.Taxi. She was serviced by a car with the number ZXY466. The driver started a conversation about the Kaufland store, about the fact that one shouldn't go to it, because it only sells Romanian goods. After that, the driver said that there are no real men in Europe. When

Ekaterina asked him where he got such statistics, he replied there all are "faggots". Ekaterina asked him why he didn't like gay people, he said he didn't consider them people. Afterwards, Ekaterina decisively interrupted the dialogue, noting that she does not want to continue discussions with a homophobe and a racist.

Ekaterina has left a comment on the Yandex.Taxi app.

HATE MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

There is no effective remedy for hate crimes and incidents against LGBT people in the Republic of Moldova. All cases are perceived as hooliganism, robbery or causing damage without regard to the hate motive based on prejudice.

The Ministry of Justice reviewed the draft Law No.301 of July 1st, 2016, amending and supplementing certain legal acts on regulating prejudice-motivated crimes, version corroborated with draft No.277 of June 20th, 2016 (hereinafter referred to as draft Law No.301). Note that the draft Law No.301 was adopted at first reading by the Parliament, and subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Justice for review. The draft Law No.301 represents a set of legislative amendments of the Criminal and Contravention Codes, referring, first, to defining the ground of prejudice, reviewing the basic crimes and the aggravations that refer to the hatred- and prejudice-motivated acts.

According to the draft Law, the Criminal Code is to be supplemented with a new article – Article 13414: Grounds of prejudice, with the following wording: (1) Grounds of prejudice mean preconceptions of the offender based on race, colour, national, social or ethnic origin, citizenship, sex, gender, language, religion or religious beliefs, political opinions, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, age, marital status, regardless of whether the deed is committed against the individual who has such protected characteristics, against their assets or the assets related to them, or against to the individual who supports those who have such protected characteristics or relate to the latter, this relation being real or perceived as real.

Thus, the Criminal Code will operate with the concept of grounds of prejudice to the detriment of the old ‘social, national, racial or religious hatred’ formula. The concept is to be used both in the text of the rules governing the basic crimes and as aggravating circumstance at Article 77(1)(d).

On September 24th, 2019, the Ministry of Justice sent the reviewed draft Law No.301 to the Committee on Human Rights and Inter-ethnic Relations and the Legal Committee for Appointments and Immunities of the Parliament, with the proposal to adopt this draft in final reading. On October 22nd, 2019, the Legal Committee for Appointments and Immunities and the Committee on Human Rights and Inter-ethnic Relations of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova organised public consultations on the draft Law No.301. During these consultations, recommendations were made to exclude, first of all, paragraph 2 of Article 346 of the Criminal Code from the updated version of the draft, given that it limits the scope of the basic rule and creates ambiguities of interpretation. If kept, this paragraph will not allow to achieve the objectives pursued and the effective regulation of prejudice-motivated acts. Another recommendation was to supplement the Contravention Code at the category of contraventions that affect the political, labour and other constitutional rights of an individual with a new rule which will regulate separately the acts which can be qualified as hate speech and which do not represent crimes.

However, the fact that the Government has reviewed this project does not guarantee that it will be voted on and will enter into force.

Currently, in most cases, people who suffer from hate crimes and incidents refuse to turn to law enforcement or go to court. In many cases, even the relatives or parents are the ones who

apply the violence. The cases reported to the GENDERDOC-M Centre represent only a small number of the total number of cases in the Republic of Moldova.

On January 29th, 2019, on the site [realitatea.md](#) [a news](#) article was published about two men, both 29 years old, originating from Strășeni and Călărași, who arrived at the hands of the people of the law, being suspected of robbery committed at the end of last year. The two would have entered at night in an annex of a non-governmental association in the village of Cojușna, would have beaten the guard and stolen more goods worth about 30 thousand leis.

The police established that the individuals acted according to a well-established plan. The victims were recruited through social networks (gay men), under the pretext of an acquaintance, then, through an abuse of trust, they convinced the victims to meet at their home. Here, suspects, by applying physical violence, dispossessed customers of goods.

On January 16th, an undercover cop was infiltrated, so a meeting was organized in Buiucani sector of the capital, where the suspects were detained. Interviewed by the police, the suspects acknowledged their crimes. Previously, they were also tried for theft, robbery, blackmail.

On the night of May 30 and 31, the car of the lawyer of the GENDERDOC-M Center, Doina Ioana Străisteanu, was intentionally set on fire by an unknown young man. The crime was [registered](#) by the camera installed on the building next to which the car was parked.

Doina Ioana Străisteanu is a human rights defender and this attack is most likely caused by this fact. Since 2010, Ms. Străisteanu has been the lawyer of GENDERDOC-M and has been defending LGBT rights at the national level, as well as preparing complaints to the European Court of Human Rights. Among the cases Doina worked on were hate crimes against homosexual people, and in the last two years, hate speech cases used by Orthodox priests who incited violence and homophobic discrimination. Currently, she represents the interests of the organization and the LGBT community in hate speech cases held by the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon.

On November 6th, on its official website, the Archdiocese published an [addressing](#) to the President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon; the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu and the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Zinaida Greceanîi, with the request not to vote on the draft law for amending and completing some legislative acts regarding the regulation of crimes motivated by prejudice. In their letter, the Archdiocese writes: *"By initiating and adopting such projects, our previous assumptions are clearly made clear that the Law on Ensuring Equality is and will be directed specifically against traditional Christian and moral values. The gradual destruction of the traditional family is still being pursued. We do not want this to be allowed and to be done in detriment to the soul of the people, of the family, of our Christian values, the intervention with increasingly surprising legislative changes. The Orthodox Church of Moldova has tolerated several unhealthy approaches - from civil partnerships and abortion to assisted reproduction and sex education in schools, but this time the draft law has culminated and exceeded any limit of the rational, considering that we inform you that the whole Christian-Orthodox community will fight for changing laws and policies that it sees as tools to undermine what it calls the "natural family".*

Cases reported by the beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre

Case 1: On the night of April 8 to 9, 2019, a gay man named Alexei (pseudonym) met a man (N) through social media. They met, had sexual relations, after which N, for no reason, without saying anything, hit Alexei in the head with a heavy object. Alexei pushed him away and tried to run away, broke the door glass, but N reached him and knocked him to the ground. N applied several stabs with a sharp object in Alexei's legs, saying: "I am not a fagot like you".

Alexei talked to him, tried to calm him down, asked him not to ruin the lives of both of them, N got up and left the apartment. Alexei called the ambulance and the police, filed a complaint with the police. Alexei was operated on in the hospital.

Case 2: On June 15, 2019, around 11:00 pm, the parents of a gay man by the name of Nicolae (pseudonym) forcibly entered the apartment where he lived with his partner and displayed extremely aggressive behaviour, claiming that the neighbours called them and complained. At that time, there were 4 people in the apartment: Nicolae, his partner D., as well as his friend M. and friend L., who stayed with them the night after a common picnic. Nicolae's parents scandalized and kicked everyone out of the house, except for their son. According to friends, while they were walking in the bathroom, where Nicolae was with his father, there were specific noises of blows. When they went outside, M., L. and D. waited in the yard and called Nicolae to ask if they should call the police. A few minutes later, Nicolae came out with his nose broken and swollen. According to him, his father hit his head on the nose. Nicolae had to leave that apartment in order to avoid being subjected to violence by his father.

Case 3: On August 6, Nichita (pseudonym), a 17-year-old gay man from Bălți, was attacked by two individuals. Nichita met one of them on the social networks a few days before and they decided to meet. At the meeting, the offender came with another young man and, for two hours, they were holding him by force, were hitting him and subjecting him to verbal humiliation. Within two hours, Nichita managed to escape from them. The young man is afraid to complain to the police because he was scared and threatened that if he does, it will get worse for him.

Case 4: On the night of November 8th to 9th, 2019, two beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre were attacked by six men about 20 years old. The incident came after the attackers persistently and aggressively tried to enter the nightclub where LGBT parties took place, being refused. As a result, they began to offend the visitors of the party, using homophobic expressions, after which they attacked the young men who were near the club.

The private security service called upon by the club's employees managed to detain two of the six attackers. At the scene of the crime, the police were called, who detained the two for identification. At the same time, the victims filed complaints.

Case 5: Veaceslav Mular, coordinator of the Health Program of the GENDERDOC-M Centre, is regularly harassed by an unknown young man of approximately 25 years of age.

In April 2019, the man also physically attacked him, punching him in the back. And after Veaceslav shouted "Police!", he fled.

In December 2019, the young man met Veaceslav on the street again and started shouting "faggot" at him, threatened to beat him, but got scared that Veaceslav would call the police and left quickly.

Case 6: B.S. lives in a village in the north of Moldova, together with his partner. For homophobic reasons he is often attacked by some fellow villagers. In August 2019, three of them threw stones at the roof of his house. B.S. filed a complaint with the police, but the police officer refused to investigate the case, telling him that he "is a paedophile and that is why he deserves to be beaten, and the stones alone he threw into the orgy."

In December 2019, a neighbour's friend beat him because he was gay. He appealed to the police, went for the forensic certificate, but this certificate was not handed to him, even though B.S. he asked. He was told that he would be sent directly to the police and attached to the file. During the next 30 days, there was no response and no action was taken on this case. However,

on December 26, B.S. received a letter from the Police Inspectorate stating that a contravention procedure for the deliberate false calling of specialized services was initiated on his behalf.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Despite the fact that the Republic of Moldova has the Law on Ensuring Equality and the Council for Ensuring Equality and Preventing Discrimination, the Council has no levers to punish acts of discrimination.

Cases reported by the beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre

Case 1: I. F. a young gay man communicated to the GENDERDOC-M Centre that he was discriminated against at work because of his sexual orientation. I. F. worked in a supermarket in Chisinau as a cashier. I. F. says that after the heads of the office learned that he had relations with another boy, his attitude towards him changed negatively - he began to be permanently checked, suspected of stealing money from the house and called a thief. The boy had to leave. Because he wrote a dismissal request at his own will and kept no evidence of discrimination, he did not file a complaint with the employer.

Case 2: On May 22, 2019, three gay young man, who were at one of the places where gay men from Bălți usually meet, were invited by one of the police officers to the area near that place. Then, without introducing himself, he searched them, questioned them and taught them a "moral" lesson. The police officer threatened to hand them over to the psychiatrist, shut them up at night in the police sector. He asked them intimate questions about their private life and provided them with the condition that they should marry women in the next two weeks, and if they do not, they will be sent to the psychiatrist. This discussion was audio recorded by one of the three young people.

Finally, the police worker told them he would let them go, if they would serve him with coffee. One of the boys had 101 lei in his pocket and the police officer took 100 leis ("for coffee") and let them free.

In this case, a complaint was filed with the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Case 3: A trans man named Y. was employed in an IT company on November 21, 2019, with a trial period of 1 week. On November 22, the young man was invited by the manager of the company and was told that he would not be hired because of the reasons that: *"You will not fit into the group, because your colleagues see you as a woman, but you call yourself a man."* Y. asked what made him think so, because he did not notice any problems with the team, the manager replied, *"You dress in women's clothes and wear women's glasses, and when you're not there, the colleagues make jokes about you."*

Y. said he did not want to file a discrimination complaint because he did not have sufficient moral resources to do so.

Case 4: On December 9th in the morning, an unknown man in transport harassed GENDERDOC-M's Executive Director, Anastasiia Danilova, when she went to the office. The man said he saw her on TV, asked if she is "the LGBT manager" and said: "You do bad things; you have to get your ass kicked". Anastasia told him she would call the police. He kept silent.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In 2019, the Pride March of the LGBT community managed to reach its final point, according to the preliminary notification to the City Hall and the Police. Police officers were protecting the march. This year, aggressive counter-protesters were not around. However, according to the organizers, the protection measures were extremely protective, for this reason, the sense of a community march was diminished or even lost. A deputy of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Dumitru Alaiba, participated in the march as well. He also participated in the marches of previous years, but it is for the first time when he participates in the event as a deputy.

The night before the march, from the 18th to 19th of May, on the walls of the houses along the route on which the "I am OK" Pride march was announced to be organised; homophobic inscriptions were made by unknown persons. The inscriptions were as follows: "The love of the faggots stinks like shit"; "Gays in the streets, sluts in the Parliament". These inscriptions remained on the walls until the end of 2019.

Several participants in the march complained about the behaviour of the officers and police collaborators:

- The volunteer of the organization, Anna R., said that after getting on the bus which the participants of the march took to be were evacuated from the final point, when she looked in the window at the policemen, one of them pointed out his fist to her with an aggressive look.
- The employee of the organization, Natalia Ozturk, reported that her granddaughter, who participated in the march, was insulted by a policeman who filmed the march with the word "*cocka*" (a humiliating term for women who practice oral sex).
- The employee of the organization, Oxana Gumennaia, said that when the rainbow flag, which she was carrying, touched one of the policemen, he shouted with hatred at her: "Don't touch me! Don't touch me, I said!". In addition, when the protesters got on the buses, a group of police officers stood not far off them, were looking at them and saying something while laughing.

THE SITUATION OF TRANS PEOPLE

The situation of trans people in the Republic of Moldova remains complicated.

Since 2019, transgender health issues will no longer be considered as mental and behavioural disorders with the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization's. The newly approved version instead places issues of gender incongruence under a chapter on sexual health.

However, the Republic of Moldova has not yet taken any steps to change the system in accordance with this decision. Transgender people are still required to provide a certificate with the diagnosis of "transsexuality", in order to be able to request the change of gender and name in the identity papers. So far, the change of documents is possible only through the decision of the courts, which takes about 6-12 months.

In 2019, 9 trans people addressed to the Centre for legal assistance: 4 of them needed legal support for legal gender recognition, and 5 following the cases of discrimination, threats, violence and harassment. None of the 5 had a desire to file a complaint with the police or the courts. The transgender social group remains the most stigmatized and vulnerable, as the physical changes are usually becoming visible and cannot be hidden.