



REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF LGBT PEOPLE'S RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA YEAR 2020

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This report reflects the situation regarding the respect of the rights of LGBT+ people as well as the political and social influence on LGBT+ people, as well as homophobia and transphobia in the society, but also the positive changes for LGBT+ in the Republic of Moldova.

The year 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, quarantine, and epidemiological measures that impose limits and bans on activities. Quarantine was the main reason for the problems with which the beneficiaries of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre addressed the team. Two pressing issues were reported: domestic violence and loss of income. Many LGBT+ people are in a bad relationship with their family because of the relatives' homophobia or transphobia. Forced to live in a room with the whole family, often without private spaces and the possibility to separate in order to communicate with someone outside, many LGBT+ people suffer from isolation and violence on the part of family members.

The number of LGBT+ people who do not have special education and qualified professions is high because they had been rejected by their families and had to support themselves as soon as they reached the age of majority or even 16 years old. These people work as salespersons, waiters/waitresses, support staff, in professions that have suffered the most because of quarantine. Low wages do not allow them to save up, and the loss of their source of income is catastrophic. Many of them approached the organisation for help because they had no food. The organisation provided food aid to more than one hundred LGBT+ people from all over Moldova.

During 2020, as in previous years, media monitoring was carried out. Thus, 710 LGBT+-related materials were documented, of which 326 are in Russian language and 384 are in Romanian.

Out of the total number of materials, 50 (7%) were positive (14 in Russian, 36 in Romanian); 160 (23%) - negative (118 in Russian, 42 in Romanian); 500 (70%) neutral (194 in Russian, 306 in Romanian). The overall percentage of positive and neutral materials was 77%. A high percentage of negative material is due to the homophobic discourse widely used within the election campaign of the Socialist Party, massively reflected in the media controlled by them.

In the autumn of 2020, presidential elections took place in Moldova. There were no homophobic statements from any candidate in the first round. Yet, in the second round, the Socialist Party and their representative Igor Dodon used homophobic statements widely. However, Igor Dodon lost

these elections in favour of his opponent Maia Sandu. Maia Sandu never used homophobic discourse in her campaigns but nor is she openly supportive of equal rights for LGBT+ people. The issue of the rights of LGBT+ people was only addressed by Maia Sandu four years ago, during the presidential election in which she declared that all people must have equal rights, including LGBT + people.

HATE SPEECH, INCITEMENT TO HATRED AND DISCRIMINATION

In 2020, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (CoE) Dunja Mijatović in the [country report](#) drew attention to the importance of preventing hate speech in the election campaign for the presidential elections of 1/15 November 2020. The Commissioner was concerned about the hate incidents, especially those from politicians, which are intensifying during election campaigns and targeting especially women, LGBT+ people and other social groups.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova noted that "hate speech against political opponents, especially on online platforms, is reprehensible, as it may exceed the freedom of expression on the Internet." The Constitutional Court issued an [Appeal to the Parliament](#), calling for the regulation of "prompt control and sanctioning mechanisms in this regard, in order to prevent and combat hate speech between electoral contestants, including in the online environment and social networks".

During the election campaign, the Council for Equality and the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination, urged both electoral contestants and political parties, as well as media institutions not to use hate speech or incitement to discrimination, by publishing [recommendations of the network of equality institutions in Europe](#) and sending an [official letter](#) to all political parties and electoral contestants and by supporting a [public appeal](#) together with civil society organisations.

The Audio-visual Council examined two notifications submitted by the Advocacy and Public Policies Community "WatchDog.MD", one of which referred to the violation of article 11, paragraph 2. They referred to the headlines "Igor Dodon's message for the second round" and "Dodon: Statehood must be preserved" in the NTV Moldova news bulletin and to two topics entitled "Statehood, a priority" and "Caring for people, the number one priority" from the news bulletin of the "Primul în Moldova" (tr. "First [channel] in Moldova") channel.

The Audio-visual Council found that the subject of the complaint was a sensitive one, as it "concerns the marches of sexual minorities". The Audio-visual Council highlighted the following statements of the independent candidate for the position of president Igor Dodon: *"Other cults, as well as the Orthodox faith, advocate for traditional values, for traditional families. I do not participate in gay marches in Chisinau, as Maia Sandu has participated in recent years. I say very firmly, in the position of the President, I will not admit such a thing together with the Government and my colleagues, while others openly say that they will admit these values, which are not our own..."*, presented in the news programme "Dodon: Statehood must be preserved" from "NTV Moldova" and *"I do not participate in gay marches in Chisinau, as Maia Sandu has participated in recent years. I say very firmly, the position of the President of the Republic of Moldova, that I will not admit such a thing, and others openly say that they will admit in the Republic of Moldova these values that are not our own"*, presented in the news programme "Care for people, the number one priority" on "Primul în Moldova".

In both cases, the Audiovisual Council decided to sanction with public warning the television stations "Primul în Moldova" and "NTV Moldova" for non-compliance with the provisions of article 13, paragraph 6 b), which stipulates that "in the context of audiovisual news and debate programs, information on matters of public interest, of a political, economic, social or cultural

nature, the following requirements must be complied with: b) the avoidance of any form of discrimination". (The information is taken from [the report of the PromoLex association](#)).

According to the [HATE SPEECH AND INCITEMENT TO DISCRIMINATION in the public space and media in the Republic of Moldova in the election campaign for the presidential elections of 1/15 November 2020](#) report prepared by the PromoLex association, the dynamic of hate speech and inciting to discrimination has grown in its intensity during the pre-electoral and electoral periods, and then reduces after the electoral campaign concludes.

LGBT+ people remain among those most affected by hate speech, especially in the election campaigns. The discourse against the LGBT+ group is largely caused by prejudice and hatred towards homosexual people, being catalysed by the rhetoric of electoral contestants and politicians, who use these prejudices to denigrate opponents or obtain political dividends, of the representatives of religious denominations or even some journalists and some media pages.

In cases where the authors were electoral contestants and politicians, the hate speech against LGBT+ people was based mainly on social and religious arguments, with homosexuality being presented as a danger, against which the whole society must mobilise and defend itself. This type of rhetoric was used by Igor Dodon, the presidential candidate, who, in several TV shows, mentioned that promoting the rights of LGBT+ people is a danger to Moldovan society, and marches to support the rights of this group must be banned primarily because he, but also the majority of society, is a follower of traditional Christian values.

During the election period, several leaflets in support of candidate Igor Dodon were distributed to citizens' mailboxes. These leaflets contained the following text: *"If Maia Sandu becomes president, Moldova has something to lose. She will be guided by a foreign agenda. A foreign agenda against the interests of our citizens and the country"*. Next, 10 items from the alleged agenda were listed. Point 7 read: *"Legalisation of same-sex marriage and the adoption of children by these gay and lesbian families"*.

On November 3rd, in a press conference in the campaign of the second round of the presidential elections, Igor Dodon, one of the candidates for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova and the actual President during the years 2016-2020 [declared](#): *"I do not participate in gay marches, as Maia Sandu has participated in recent years. Think very carefully, dear parents, what we will achieve in schools with such a president"*. The reply was addressed to his opponent Maia Sandu.

In the show "Вечерний разговор с Павлом Дугановым" (tr. *"Evening talk with Pavel Duganov"*) from 12.11.2020 on TVC 21, [Igor Dodon stated](#) (translation from Russian): *"I believe that [homosexuality] kills our morality, destroys the foundation of our society. I think that the West probably does not yet understand this fact, but this is a serious problem. And you know, I think this is done intentionally, like placing a bomb or a mine with a delayed action, which will blow up society over a period of time. I understand that people are different by nature, by their personality, not everyone can be the same, but such things cannot be taught in schools, demonstrated at parades and other things that some people try to do ... even my political opponents. I will never allow this. As an Orthodox Christian, as a president, as a citizen, as a patriot of this country, I will always promote our traditions and values"*.

On 05.10.2020, the candidate for president [Renato Usafii stated](#) in a meeting with voters that he is against the marches in support of the rights of LGBT+ people (translation from Russian): *"Today the world can gather on land, in the park, can defend its point of view, there you go. Yes, I am against gay, lesbian, etc. marches, as I said, at night, desirably on the Mărculești shooting training ground and others"*.

On 11.11.2020, in several live interventions on social networks, the local counsellor of the Aluatu village and activist [Vlad Bilețchi made derogatory statements](#) against politicians and party members. In the election campaign, most of the cases generated by Vlad Bilețchi targeted either the independent candidate Igor Dodon or the PSRM members who supported the former: *“How do you relax when Bătrîncea appears behind you ... Do you know the joke with Good evening? The one with the homosexual donkey in the woods that managed to drop by all the animals except the lion, even by the lioness. The lion comes home and sees that this crazy donkey came to the lioness too... he puts a cork **there** and stays like that for a week, afraid that Bătrîncea will come...”*

The same activist, on 11.11.2020, during the show on 10 TV „[În direct cu Vlad Bilețchi](#)” (tr. “Live with Vlad Bilețchi”), said (translation from Romanian): *“I recommend the socialists to be more attentive to these statements, because they have people in their electoral staff who are part of these sexual minorities, people who like these activities that they are so afraid of. They say we don't accept lesbians; we don't accept gays. Dear Mr. Dodon, take a closer look at your electoral staff, look among your men that are staff leaders, Vardanean, Bătrîncea and everyone else. In fact, I should have started with Bătrîncea, take a closer look at him and see if he doesn't somehow have the inclinations and interests like that ...”*

On 13.09.2020, the activist Fiodor Ghelici in a [video material broadcasted](#) live on his Facebook page, in response to a journalist, associated homosexuality with a disease (translation from Russian): *“I am interested in the appearance of women. I love women. But, Mr. Zapadinsky, it made me think that you had become interested in my appearance and that of Usatîi. You probably have symptoms of paederasty. If they drew your attention, if my appearance and Usatîi's attention drew your attention, Mr. Zapadinsky, it makes me think about this, probably with age comes such a condition as paederasty.”*

According to PromoLex, hate speech towards LGBT+ people is one of the most aggressive. Electoral contestants and politicians use it to denigrate political opponents, but also to manipulate and promote prejudice. The latter helps electoral contestants and politicians fuel various social fears, which inevitably lead to the coalition of certain groups against LGBT+ people. Last but not least, the use of prejudices based on sexual orientation in the media leads to the perpetuation of a high degree of intolerance towards these people and the emergence of even acts of violence.

On September 11th, Cojocaru Dinari, a member of the Municipal Council that makes part of the Socialist Party, made a [public post](#) about a rainbow drawn in front of a kiosk on wheels selling Dutch mini-waffles.

Mr Cojocari said (translation from Romanian): *“A few days ago I was notified by a family who, walking through the park to reach this place, were asked by the children what this sign would mean. You know very well that this sign is the flag of people who promote the non-traditional family, which is not characteristic of us Christians. I will come with a notification to the local public authority so that this can be removed and so that [the owner] be fined according to the corresponding article... I will take it under my personal control so that in Chișinău such signs would no longer exist. We traditionally do not tolerate such families, moreover we want to raise a family and a healthy generation”.*

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

Case 1: On January 20th, a man named Maxim Șevciuc wrote a hate-infused message on Messenger to the director of the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre, Anastasia Danilova.

The messenger said the following: *“Filthy dirty lesbian”*.
There was a complaint filed with Facebook Support.

Case 2: L.C. is a young lyceum student from “N.V. Gogol” lyceum from Chişinău. She communicated to the organisation that on February 3rd, 2020 her civic education teacher resorted to hate speech in front of the pupils, after she, in the framework of the lesson’s topic, classified homosexuality as “deviant behaviour”.

When a part of the class tried to protest this classification, the teacher would not pay any attention to them, discussing her point of view only with those who agreed with her.

Case 3: On March 15th, Pavel Borşevschi, the pastor of the most visited church (St. Dumitru's Church) in Chişinău, during the sermon in the time of the Mass, hinted to the 200 people present that he knows where COVID-19 comes from: *“The church knows on whose account this terrible disease came upon us. It’s because of those who legislated those marriages, God forbid I name which (same-sex ones)”*.

Case 4: On May 17th, Iurie Roşca, a former member of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, posted a [video](#) on his Facebook page analysing an open letter signed by several Embassies in the Republic of Moldova on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia.

The video gained 1300 views and got shared 98 times.

In this video, Iurie Roşca humiliating expressions that incite hatred, discrimination, and violence against LGBT+ community:

“There is no sexual orientation, there is sexual deviation, sexual perversity, satanism manifested through this disease of spiritual nature, moral, physical and behavioural, to be precise”;

“To guarantee equal chances and equal treatment to all people. Yes, normal people, yes. Handicaps need to be isolated”;

“Who the hell is going to respect you? Not even at the end of the world, nor in the face of death and the unclean, a normal human would be able but to spit in between your eyes. Since you satanise and sodomise in cellars, in your flats, you have nothing to do but that, lose your redemption... Do you have a claim on decency? Equal treatment? Well, don’t put yourself on display, mister, with these demons from outside that drag you out to the front.”;

„Listen, guys, stop discriminating them, spit them in the eye when you see them and just move along”.

A complaint with the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality was filed. The Council decided that these statements were inciting hatred and discrimination. Based on this decision, a request for a lawsuit was filed on the name of Iurie Roşca.

Case 5: On May 17th, there were 6 informative videos published on social media pages of the Information Centre GENDERDOC-M. The videos were on different topics related to LGBT+. These videos have gathered multiple hate comments:

“You and all homosexuals need to be burned at the stake like witches”;

“Idiots and faggots”;

“The idea of homosexuals walking down the streets is normal to you? You’re sick”;

“Have you forgotten about paedophiles and zoophiles, insectofiles and plantophiles, what shall we do with them?”. The comments were removed and reported.

Case 6: During the Moldova Pride festival, which took place on June 4th-21st, the organisation received messages of hatred: *“You should all be lined up against the wall [and shot]. Why are you destroying the society, you whores? Too bad you cannot be lynched, to give a lesson to all faggots”.*

Case 7: N.D. worked from October 2019 to January 2020 at a construction company. Throughout the entire work period, N. was being harassed by the colleagues because of his sexuality. Colleagues would throw away his work shoes, swear at him, kick him out of the trailer where they changed, telling him to undress with the dogs. One of his colleagues took his phone away from him with force and read aloud the names on his contact list. The rest of the co-workers laughed. N.D. did not file a complaint because he did not know the first names of his harassing co-workers and did not have an official employment contract.

Case 8: On July 3rd, 2020, the interview of the coordinator of the GENDERDOC-M support group for trans people, Maxim Cuclev, was published on social networks. A person with the Facebook name Adolf Schmal shared the interview with the following comment. *“What the hell, God, damn it! If at your age for “freedom” you don’t have enough lipstick, then damn it, man, you don’t know in your life what problems mean and what “lack of freedom” is, this is what I am telling you! Be patient, 7-8 years ago people would look in shock at a tattoo, although even now they sometimes look weirdly. In a few years, they won’t look at weirdos like you either, now every other rapper paints his nails... Regarding feminism and women’s rights, he says it well. I am a feminist, too, the woman has to work on an equal footing, be useful as any other person, and be held accountable for her words equally! I’m a FEMINIST, you know! The rest is castles in the air, and I think the guy saw how blogger Andrei Petrov is hyping now and decided to repeat it. I just think that, living in Moldova, the probability of getting hit in the face in the streets is higher than in Moscow, which in terms of subculture surpasses us by about 10 years. By the way, I have nothing against gays and I think that way more heterosexuals are faggots (translation comment: “faggot” in Russian and Romanian is often used as an equivalent of “motherfucker”) in a moral way!”.*

There were more hate comments left under the post, one of them was written by a famous local blogger – Andrei Bashtannik: *“Let the Torro delivery guy fuck him up”.*

Maxim filed a complaint with the Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination. The council said the case falls within the purview of the police because it contains physical threats. The request to the police was submitted in October, the police did not communicate anything about the actions taken later.

Case 9: During the Moldova Pride Festival on June 17th, the satiric award ceremony "Enamel Bowl" took place. One of the anti-winners was the newspaper "Комсомольская правда в Молдове" (a.k.a. KP, rus. *Komsomol Truth in Moldova*) which had been repeatedly publishing homophobic and transphobic materials. On August 19th, 2020, this newspaper published an article titled *"Disorderly dishonesty: homosexuals robbed the newsroom of KP in Moldova"* in the article were several homophobic statements and accusations that they did not receive the anti-award, meaning that they were robbed: *"...we are dealing with trivial deception or theft"; "... the participants in the ceremony stole our prize (judging by their pretty faces, they could easily have)"*.

These statements, from a "news" portal, obtained 14 comments in support, each of them expressing, in different forms, hatred towards the LGBT+ community. A prior request was made with the requirement to make a public apology and pay non-pecuniary damages. KP did not respond to the request.

PREJUDICE-BASED VIOLENCE

There is no effective remedy for hate crimes and incidents against LGBT+ people in the Republic of Moldova. Most cases are perceived as hooliganism, robbery or causing harm without regard to the reason for prejudice-based hatred.

In 2020, no progress was made in the process of the development of draft law no. 301 of 01.07.2016 for the amendment and completion of some legislative acts regarding the regulation of crimes motivated by prejudice, the version merged with project no. 277 of 20.06.2016 (hereinafter referred to as the draft law no. 301), revised by the Ministry of Justice in the previous monitoring period.

We recall that the draft law no. 301 means a series of legislative amendments to the Criminal Code and the Contravention Code, which relate primarily to the definition of grounds for prejudice, the review of basic offenses and aggravating circumstances related to acts of hatred and prejudice.

The draft law no. 301 was adopted in first reading by the Parliament in 2016, and subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Justice for review. In 2019, the Ministry of Justice sent the revised draft law no. 301 to the Parliament's Committee on Human Rights and Interethnic Relations and the Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs, Appointments and Immunities, with a proposal for its adoption in final reading.

Following the [public consultations](#) organised on October 22, 2019 by the Committee on Legal Affairs, Appointments and Immunities and the Committee on Human Rights and Interethnic Relations of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, the draft law was to be finalised by the members of the Committee on Legal Affairs, Appointments and Immunities, taking into account the recommendations made by civil society.

However, in February 2020, it was found that the recommendations and amendments proposed to finalise draft law no. 301 were not included. Thus, on March 5, 2020, the Committee on Legal Affairs, Appointments and Immunities organised a new round of [public consultations](#), in which [civil society and CPPEDAE amendments](#) were reiterated. They were targeted at:

1. the exclusion of paragraph (2) from Art. 346 of the Criminal Code, from the updated version of the draft, given the fact that it limits the scope of the basic rule and creates ambiguities of interpretation, so that the maintenance of paragraph (2) in Art. 346 of the Criminal Code will not allow the achievement of the objectives pursued and the efficient regulation of the facts motivated by prejudice;

2. completing the Contravention Code, in the category of contraventions that infringe on the political, labour and other constitutional rights of the natural person, with a new rule, which should regulate separately the deeds that can be qualified as hate speech and which do not represent a crime. (This information is taken from [the report of the PromoLex association](#))

Until the end of the monitoring period, however, the Parliament did not adopt draft law no. 301, so that the national legislation in the field remains non-compliant with the international standards regarding the sanctioning of hate speech.

Currently, in most cases, people who suffer from hate crimes and incidents refuse to appeal to law enforcement or go to court. In many cases, it is even relatives or parents who use violence. The cases that are reported to the GENDERDOC-M Centre represent only a small fraction of the total number of cases existing in the Republic of Moldova.

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

Case 1: M.A., a young woman of 25 years, reported that her father had been constantly subjecting her to verbal, emotional, and physical violence because of her sexual orientation. The girl had several traumas over the years, including fractures, but she was too afraid to go to the police. On January 20th, M.A. appealed to the organisation for legal aid. M.A. has been consulted on her rights and possibilities of protection.

Case 2: Maxim Cuclev is a non-binary person. In January, while walking down the street, he got verbally assaulted by a young man. The man asked him what was on his face (Maxim had decorative make-up on), told him that men don't wear such a thing, said it was disgusting, spat at Maxim's feet and left.

Case 3: During a get-together with his university colleagues, Maxim Cuclev got assaulted by one of them. The colleague in question was in an advanced state of intoxication and had an aggressive behaviour with women within the group. Maxim called him out on his behaviour, which led to the colleague grabbing Maxim's hands and telling Maxim that Maxim is a “faggot”.

Case 4: On April 15th around 11pm, N.C. was walking down the Ștefan cel Mare Boulevard. In front of the “Gemenii” store, a minibus stopped next to him and several people forced him to get into the car. N.C. he was forcibly taken to a yard of a residential complex on Calea Basarabiei Street, humiliated and beaten there. He was forced to put on a condom on his head and then eat the rest. While forcing him to do all these things, the attackers commented: “Faggot, dickhole, we’ll set you on fire with a lighter. After these humiliations N.C. was beaten again. One of the aggressors filmed everything that happened and shared this video on Facebook. The aggressed man came to GENDERDOC-M for legal support. A complaint was filed with the police and a criminal case was initiated.

Case 5: A., a 15-year-old girl, lives with her family and 3 other siblings. Her father is often aggressive and uses physical violence against her. On May 8th, a friend of A's told her parents that she is a lesbian. Her parents got angry and hit her head with a door. A. ran away from home and sought help from the representatives of GENDERDOC-M for legal support. The minor went to the Râșcani sector police station to file a complaint on domestic violence with the support of GDM representatives. Police officer Dereli Ruslan refused to register the complaint and called the parents to the sector. The policeman was announced that the victim’s support entourage would call 112 (Single National Emergency Appeals Service) to register the refusal to receive the complaint on domestic violence. Only after that did he initiate the procedure and invited a specialist working with minor victims of domestic violence and the victim’s grandmother. The grandmother was the right person to take care of her at the time, until a unanimous decision of a Committee specially summoned regarding the case is reached.

A complaint was filed with the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the actions of police officer Dereli Ruslan.

Case 6: On the night of June 2nd, Marin Bunescu, a young gay man, was physically assaulted right in the heart of Chișinău town centre. An individual got into a rude discussion with Marin about how he looks. Marin refused to talk to him, then the man hit Marin. Marin fell down and the individual started kicking him in the face and the chest. Marin managed to get up and flee from the crime scene. The next day Marin went to the Emergency Hospital. By the usual protocol, the doctors should have offered him help and call the police, but the doctors refused to receive him due to the pandemic and redirected him to another hospital. Marin's face was bruised and he felt bad on public transportation because he attracted a lot of unsolicited attention from other passengers. He didn't want to go to the other hospital anymore, so he went home. For six months Marin had been staying in his house, afraid to go out, only sometimes going out for food and groceries. Only after six months did he start communicating with friends and employees of the GENDERDOC-M Centre. Chances of finding criminals after so long were gone.

Case 7: On July 5th, D., a 17-year-old gay man turned to GENDERDOC-M's Lobby and Advocacy program coordinator, Angela Frolov, and told her he'd been kidnapped and threatened by his older brother because he is gay. He was keeping him in his parents' house and wouldn't let

him out. Angela Frolov recommended him calling 112 to inform the police. The young man followed the advice.

Shortly, at 5pm, a police crew with car number MAI 1129 arrived, they did not even take D. into account, they started the discussion with his brother and father. The brother told them that what was happening was an act of education because D. was in a relationship with a man at the time. The police addressed D. saying that his brother is doing the right thing and that they would be much harsher in such a situation with their brothers. D. called Angela Frolov again and told her about the behavior of the police, Angela asked him to the names of the police officers, but they had refused to introduce themselves prior to D. Later, they also refused to talk to Angela Frolov on the phone.

Understanding that the law enforcement officers are not fulfilling their functions and aggressed the victim, Angela Frolov called 112 and communicated what happened, requesting that another crew be sent to the scene to investigate the case properly. Meanwhile, the policemen from the first crew filmed D. crying and asking them for help, saying that this video would be posted on YouTube and everyone was going to laugh at him. The second crew arrived in a few minutes, behaving appropriately. They made a report and D.'s brother was warned that if he would not leave him alone, they would issue a protection order. D. was taken to the police inspectorate to file the complaint.

After what happened, Angela Frolov made a post on Facebook in which she told about what happened. The police from the first crew, finding out about this post, called D. with threats that if this post would not be deleted, there will be serious consequences for both him and Angela Frolov. A complaint was filed against the illegal actions of police officers.

Case 8: A. is a trans woman living with her mother and brother, both of whom use verbal and emotional violence against her because of her gender identity. A. cannot find a well-paid job to be able to rent an apartment separate from her relatives.

Case 9: I. is a trans woman who lives with her mother, the mother is harassing and humiliating her constantly because of her gender identity.

Case 10: M. is a trans man from Transnistria, living with his daughter and parents. M. says that he and his daughter are both victims of domestic violence coming from M.'s parents, however the police is not taking any measures to protect them. M. had filed multiple complaints before. M. was helped to find organisations in Transnistria capable of providing assistance in situations of domestic violence.

Case 11: A.S. is a woman going through divorce. Her husband found out that A.S. is in a relationship with another woman and has used violence on her. In the divorce process, the husband is using her sexual orientation as a reason to deprive her of custody over their son. On the night of July 26th, her husband beat the woman's romantic partner. A.S. and her partner are assisted by the lawyer of the GENDERDOC-M Centre, Doina Ioana Străisteanu. The women received a protection order against the ex-husband. Following the divorce, the child was left in the care of the mother.

Case 12: G.T. is a 16-year-old young man. He came out to his mother as gay. His mother forcibly sent him to one of the European countries, where his father had been working, to keep the boy and his boyfriend apart. The young man managed to return to Moldova in a month and fled with his boyfriend to Transnistria. After being threatened by his mother that she would announce him in search, G.T. returned home. At home, the young man was subjected to violence from his mother and taken to the police to receive "educational lessons". The police collaborators

suggested the young man turns to sex work in order to “satisfy his desires” or to go to a psychiatric hospital. G.T.'s boyfriend is threatened with death by G.T.'s family.

The organisation received 4 anonymous complaints from LGBT people:

Case 13: A gay man was verbally aggressed and insulted by his colleagues at work because of his sexual orientation.

Case 14: A young gay man was harassed by the police workers in the centre of Chişinău at the Central Bus Station. A police officer threatened the boy because of his appearance, saying, “I’ll fucking hit you in the head right now”.

Case 15: A minor gay man from Chişinău wrote, “My parents do not accept homosexuality! I am constantly humiliated with offensive obscene words, violence, blackmail, threats etc. This happens all the time in the house I’m living in with my parents, my mother, to be specific”.

Case 16: A teenager from Bălţi municipality was verbally aggressed by a teacher from his school. The teacher has insulted him with an obscene phrase “a crazy fucked up faggot”.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Despite the fact that in the Republic of Moldova there is a law for ensuring equality and a Council for Ensuring Equality and Preventing Discrimination existent, the Council does not have the leverage to punish acts of discrimination. The bill that would change the powers of the Council has been underway for many years, but it has not reached Parliament.

During the Moldova Pride festival, the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre signed a contract with a private limited company, “Standart”, to place three advertising panels with the festival logo and slogan “I’m beside you but you don’t know me” in Chişinău. These panels were discussed on social networks by various representatives of the Baptist religion. One of them, Victor Mîrza wrote on his Facebook page: *“This is what kind of posters are hung in the city. Guess what kind of advertising it is. You won’t understand until you look in the upper left corner, it’s genderdoc. It’s lgbt propaganda. Homosexuality in Moldova has gone on the offensive. Question: why is such kind of advertising allowed? How should we react? Why is there such strong discrimination against traditional family values? Why do our children need to see and know this? The lesson of Sodom and Gomorrah has not yet been learned. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sodomites, nor perverts. (Corinthians 6.9)”*.

The next day all three panels were removed and Victor Mîrza wrote the following post: *“Yesterday I made a post about these advertising panels. Thank you for such a prompt reaction - today there is no more hidden propaganda of this mess”*. The post also had two pictures attached, one with the panel displayed and the second from the next day of the panel removed.

GENDERDOC-M representatives called Standart to ask why the panels were removed prematurely in violation of the contract. The Standart representative said that they were contacted by the City Hall and they were told to remove those panels if they do not want to have problems. They decided to remove the panels and return the money to GENDERDOC-M for the remaining period of the contract. GENDERDOC-M representatives insisted that it is discrimination, and if the Standart representatives are intimidated by the City Hall and violate the terms of the contract, the organisation will have to sue them for discrimination. In a few days, the City Hall announced that it was removing all billboards from the city centre because they were damaging the city’s

image. The only panels that were removed in those days were the GENDERDOC-M panels, the rest remained untouched.

On June 30th, GENDERDOC-M filed a complaint with the Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, calling for actions to be found as direct discrimination on the basis of sexuality and gender identity in access to public service contracted and paid for by the organisation. On 02.20.2020, the Council issued a decision by which Standart are deemed responsible for discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and gender identity.

GENDERDOC-M filed a lawsuit against Standart SRL on the grounds of discrimination.

In 2019 during the local elections, Ion Ceban, the Mayor of Chişinău made several homophobic statements. During the electoral debates of 29.10.2019, when asked if he would admit, as mayor, the LGBT+ manifestations, he [answered](#): *“You do what you want, as long as it does not affect other things. Do what you want at home but not in public, to disturb the other side of society. I will not authorise the marches. We must respect the wishes of the majority”*.

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

Case 1: Gicu is a 20-year-old gay man who is in a very bad relationship with his parents because of his sexuality. He worked abroad and bought expensive things, which he cannot take away from home because his parents do not allow him to enter their house after they found out that Gicu is gay.

Case 2: Sergiu was beat up by one of his village neighbours in December 2019 on the grounds of his sexuality. He filed a complaint with the police but received no response within the deadline. He called the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) green line and denounced this fact, then he was contacted by the MIA workers who took explanations from the district police officer. The officer said that he had sent the letter in time and it was not his fault that Sergiu had not received it. He addressed the GENDERDOC-M Centre for help, said that the district police officer is on good terms with the offender and for this reason the process is delayed.

Case 3: In June Lera, a trans woman, called a taxi from Eko Taxi. Seeing the passenger, the taxi driver Alexandru Untila refused to drive her, even though the service had already been paid for with a bank card. The reason to that is that the driver did not like the way Lera, the passenger, looked. The driver insulted her and started filming her on his phone without her consent.

Lera addressed the taxi company's administration, received an apology and a refund.

Case 4:

A. is a non-binary person from Transnistria, he does not want to serve in the army because he is afraid of discrimination. A. had a certificate with the diagnosis of “transsexualism”. He was examined by a doctor at the military registration and enlistment office. The doctor saw that A. had cuts on his hands and sent him to a psychiatrist. In the psychiatry ward, A. was asked why he would not cut his hands more. The medics said they can't prescribe any treatment and that he only had to drink some anxiolytic pills.

The military commissioner, meeting him at the hospital, said: *“What are you doing, do you understand that you put a stain on your whole life? Are you a faggot? Why did you bring a certificate that you are a girl? Let's go talk”*.

After several pressures from the commissioner and the doctors, A. fled from Transnistria and began the process of regaining Moldovan citizenship.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In the year 2020, the LGBT+ community's Pride March was cancelled due to the pandemic situation. Instead of the march, all the supporters of the organisation were urged to go out with their close ones and go live on the social networks with the hashtags [#SuntOkSaTeCunosc](#) (I am okay to know you) and [#SuntOk2020](#) (I am okay 2020).

THE SITUATION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

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

According to the latest version of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11), published by the World Health Organisation, "gender identity disorders" have been reclassified as "gender inconsistency". Gender non-compliance is now included in the chapter on sexual health, instead of "mental disorder", as in the previous classification.

However, the Republic of Moldova has not yet taken any steps to change the system in accordance with this decision. Trans people are still required to provide a certificate with a diagnosis of "transsexualism" in order to request a change of gender and name in identity documents. Until now, the change of documents is possible only by the decision of the courts, a process that lasts around 6-12 months.

The Commission for Gender Identity Disorder Identification, within the State Clinical Hospital of Psychiatry, which issues the diagnosis, does not have a website and one cannot find anywhere online the contacts or at least the official name of the commission. Therefore, the usual way for trans people to start the process of legal gender recognition and transition is to contact GENDERDOC-M for more information. The trans people who went through these investigations said that they were asked a lot of awkward, intimate questions, for example about the way they have sexual intercourse. Moreover, some of the beneficiaries had to be hospitalised for more thorough examinations. Hospitalisation in a psychiatric hospital is disturbing in itself, but this also involves a temporary exit from social life. It is assumed that the person must give up studies and/or work for a significant period. Respectively, many people give up the transition procedure at this stage.

The psychiatric examination of trans people will logically disappear at the beginning of 2022 when WHO member states will move to the mandatory use of ICD-11. Until then, doctors are obliged to follow the procedure, as explained by Vadim Aftene, the new chairperson of the Commission for Gender Identity Disorder Identification. Vadim Aftene also said that he is currently working on a guide for transgender people which will clearly explain the procedure and the steps a transgender person has to go through to obtain a diagnosis and begin the process of medical transition.

Vadim Aftene says that the conclusion of this psychiatric commission, even if it is exceeded, gives you the advantage of receiving hormonal treatment and certain surgeries based on the state medical insurance. In Moldova you can indeed legally benefit from free medical services in the process of medical transition, however, de facto, it is not always easy to access these services. In the Republic of Moldova, one can undergo voice change surgery, orchiectomy, mastectomy. However, the medical insurance only covers the orchiectomy (surgical operation by which one or both testicles are removed). It is an operation that is recommended if the patient undergoes hormonal replacement therapy to reduce the stress level imposed on the hormonal system.

At the moment, the biggest problem for a transgender individual willing to go through transition is to find an endocrinologist without prejudices, a specialist who would agree to help a trans person go through this intricate procedure. That said, GENDERDOC-M offers contacts of trans-friendly doctors from different fields from their database.

CONCLUSION

In the recent years, a positive change in society towards LGBT+ people can be observed, a fact confirmed by the various periodic surveys conducted on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. A [study](#) conducted by the Council for Equality and the Preventing of Discrimination, published in 2019, shows a decrease in the social distance from LGBT people from 5.2 in 2015 (acceptance as a visitor to the country) to 4.4 in 2018 (acceptance as citizen of the country).

At the end of 2019, the GENDERDOC-M Information Centre contracted Magenta Consulting for a research on the attitude of the inhabitants of Chişinău towards LGBT+ people. The results of the study showed the following: 7% of citizens support LGBT+ people, 37% are neutral, and 55% have a negative attitude towards them.

The next study will take place in the fall of 2021. The results of the study will show how attitudes towards LGBT + people have changed in two years.