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#EU4Youth

148 Roma NEET youth have been supported in finding jobs and developing entrepreneurial skills over the past two years

Integrating NEET youth (not in employment, education, or training), especially from disadvantaged communities such as the Roma, requires cross-sectoral cooperation to overcome barriers related to education, social services, and vocational training. These issues, along with solutions for the professional inclusion of Roma youth, were discussed at the latest meeting of the Moldovan National Steering Group on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship. During the event, organized by the **EU4Youth Phase III Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Programme**, EU4Youth representatives officially handed over the coordination of the Steering Group to the new board.

Felicia Bechtold, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection: *"The implementation of the EU4Youth Programme in Moldova is essential due to its positive impact on the Roma community. Throughout this process, Roma youth have benefited from tangible opportunities for social integration and professional development, expressed their ideas, improved their skills, and actively contributed to the progress of their communities. I am confident that through our continued collaboration, we will explore even more opportunities for all young people in Moldova."*

In terms of concrete results, since the establishment of the Moldovan National Steering Group on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (2023-2025), over 148 Roma NEET youth have been connected to educational and vocational opportunities and received direct support for employment and entrepreneurship. Awareness campaigns, both online and offline, have increased engagement and facilitated access to various resources.

Lorenzo Nava, EU4Youth Programme International Key Expert: *"In Moldova, in the last two years, together with the Roma and Sinti community in Chişinău, we have piloted a kind of Youth Guarantee programme, which means that we have brought together actors from the public sector, from the private sector and from civil society with the task of finding solutions on how to include Roma young people in employment measures, in employment policies, in opportunities."*

The active involvement of all relevant stakeholders is crucial in order to provide Roma NEET youth with real opportunities for integration and access to employment. The ongoing cooperation between the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), the General Directorate of Employment (DGOFM) Chişinău, the Agency for Interethnic Relations (ARI), specialised NGOs, community leaders, networks of community mediators and the EU4Youth Programme is creating

a sustainable framework for identifying and connecting Roma youth to existing educational and vocational opportunities.

Raisa Dogaru, Director of the National Employment Agency: *"One of the main initiatives promoted by the European Commission to fight youth unemployment in Moldova and prevent young people from falling into the NEET category is the Youth Guarantee, launched in 2023. The aim of this initiative is to ensure that no young person is left behind and that all benefit from support to enter the labour market. Within our institution, we have established a co-management structure that brings together relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society. Through this platform, we want to monitor and actively contribute to the implementation and adaptation of this initiative in Chişinău and its suburbs."*

These joint efforts need to be a continuous process, as confirmed by the reports presented by the community mediators during the event: "Report on relevant opportunities identified for Roma NEET youth in Chisinau" and "Needs assessment and demographic report of young Roma in Chisinau municipality". According to these reports, improving the access of NEET Roma youth to education and the labour market requires concrete measures tailored to their specific challenges. For instance, increasing access to education and training can be achieved through scholarships, education subsidies, flexible learning programmes and the development of dual training systems that combine theoretical learning with practical experience.

The EU4Youth Phase III Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Programme, funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, is being executed by the Central Project Management Agency (CPVA) in Eastern Partnership countries. These include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The programme will run until the middle of 2025 and aims to provide technical assistance to governmental and non-governmental organisations to tackle youth unemployment and improve employability.