

Summary of the activity and results obtained in the project in 2025

25.80012.0807.67SE "Demographic ageing and the sustainability of social systems"

The project results demonstrate an integrated approach to the sustainability of Moldova's social systems amidst rapid demographic change, combining economic, demographic, and social analysis with the development of practical tools for decision-makers. The first component of the project evaluated Moldova's capacity to converge by 2040 towards the levels of per capita social expenditure seen in EU member states. The analysis highlighted both the structural limitations imposed by Moldova's significantly lower GDP per capita compared to the European average and the genuine potential to reach levels comparable to those of Central and Eastern European countries. The econometric models used enabled projections of GDP at purchasing power parity and the share of social expenditure in GDP, showing that economic growth and demographic dynamics will jointly influence a process of partial convergence: by 2040, Moldova may surpass the levels of several post-socialist EU countries, though the gap with Western European economies will still be considerable.

The project also produced estimates of the impact of population ageing on public health expenditures. Using projection methods based on National Transfer Accounts and demographic scenarios, the analysis demonstrated that budgetary pressures will increase considerably due to the rapid growth of the 65+ population, especially those aged 80 and above. The age distribution of expenditures shows a clear shift towards older age groups. While in 2024 the majority of public health spending was allocated to adults aged 45–64, by 2040 the proportion assigned to people aged 70 and over is expected to rise significantly, whereas the share for younger age groups (under 40) is projected to decrease. The share of the 80+ population nearly doubles, reflecting both the numerical increase of this cohort and their high per capita medical costs. This structural change highlights the rising fiscal burden of ageing and the growing importance of long-term care and geriatric services.

Mitigating the negative impacts of demographic ageing can be achieved through the promotion of active ageing policies. In this regard, a practical guide for central and local public authorities: "Active and Healthy Ageing: A Guide to Good Practices", was developed as part of the project. The guide offers practical directions needed to turn demographic challenges into opportunities for social development. It advocates an integrated approach based on international principles and presents intervention models validated in advanced countries, which can help reduce financial strain on public systems and increase the participation and autonomy of older people. Measures such as lifelong health promotion, prevention, community-based care, combating ageism, creating age-friendly environments, and supporting digital inclusion can decrease the need for costly services in later life and improve the quality of life for older adults, while strengthening the resilience of health and social protection systems.

By combining econometric analysis, demographic projections, and practical policy-oriented solutions, the project provides a coherent picture of Moldova's social outlook through 2040. The integration of the three components demonstrates that the sustainability of social systems depends not only on economic capacity but also on investments in human capital, inclusion, prevention, and the adaptation of services to the realities of a rapidly changing population.

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