



# MOLDOVA

## INSIGHT PAPER

**Authors:** Doina Dumitrescu  
European Integrated Projects (EIP)

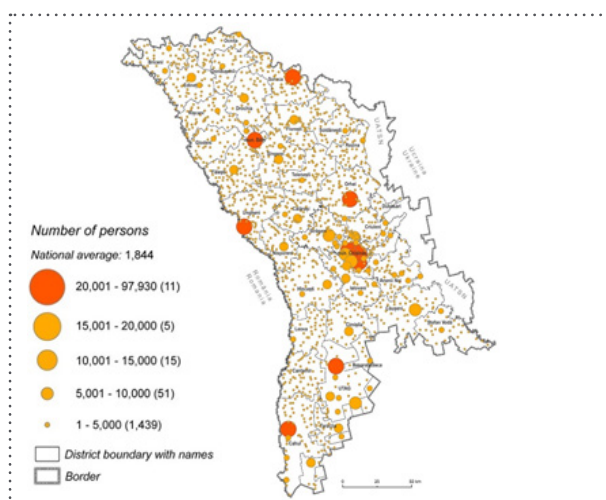
**Date:** 01.05.2019

## RURALITY (1)

The Republic of Moldova is a predominantly rural country with 57% of the population living in rural areas in 2018, while 43% of the population lives in urban areas. Based on previous population data, a rural – urban migration pattern emerges, because in 2013, the above-mentioned distribution was 58.6% for rural areas and 41.4% for urban areas.

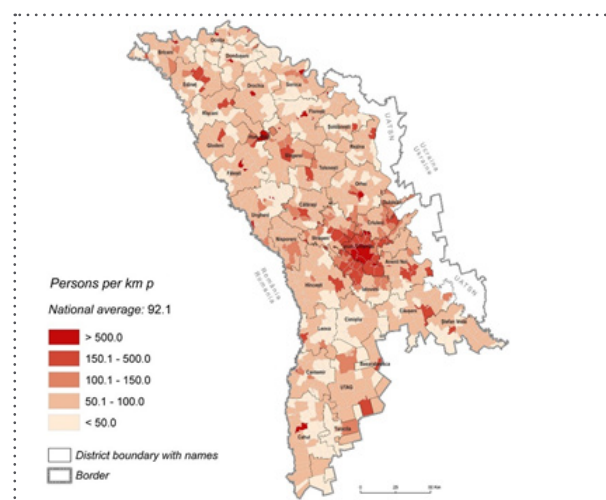
The following maps show the distribution of population and the population density in the country. As seen below, the largest agglomerations of population are around the capital region, i.e. Chisinau, and 2 major urban centres, i.e. Balti in the north and Cahul in the southwest. These dominant cities attract population from both urban and rural settlements in the country, primarily for work and other services.

### Population distribution per settlements



Source: The Republic of Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics<sup>1</sup>, 2014 census

### Population densities per communes



Source: The Republic of Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics<sup>1</sup>, 2014 census

1 - National Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Moldova:  
[www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Rezultate/Harti/Distributie\\_populatiei\\_localitati\\_A3.jpg](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Rezultate/Harti/Distributie_populatiei_localitati_A3.jpg)

2 - National Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Moldova:  
<http://recensamant.statistica.md/ro/maps/republic#&gid=1&pid=2>

## DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

43%

Share of people  
living in cities

57%

Share of people  
living in rural areas

Source: National Statistics, January 2018

## GEOGRAPHY

The Republic of Moldova is located in the South-East of Europe, being bordered by Romania to the West and Ukraine to the North, East and South. The country is not a member of the European Union but multifaceted relations have been developed, including a cooperation in the field of migration (i.e. Mobility Partnership).

The country is faced with a high level of migration (both rural – urban migration and emigration) and such a significant movement of the population reduces the reliability of official data, as responsible authorities are not able to update the data at the same pace of the migration phenomenon.

The territory of the Republic of Moldova is organized in administrative-territorial units: districts, cities and villages. More than two villages can form a commune, while a district is a territorial administrative unit made up of villages (communes) and cities united by the territory, economic and social cultural relations. There are 32 districts in the country and a total of 1,682 localities; from these 982 are incorporated (de jure with 982 mayors and 982 local councils), including 53 cities or/towns, another 13 cities with municipality status, and 916 rural localities, covering the entire area of the country. Moldova has 5 development regions: North, Centre and South, together with 2 regions with a special

status the Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia, and the Territorial Administrative Unit from the left part of Nistru river, generically known as Transnistria.

Densely populated rural areas are characteristic for Moldova. The average population of a village is 1400 inhabitants, while the largest villages have a population ranging from eight to twelve thousand. The network of settlements has a balanced territorial distribution, but functionally it is excessively dominated by the capital city Chisinau. Ensuring functional connections between rural and urban areas has always been a challenge, even during the Soviet period, and disparities between urban and rural areas have increased after the liberalization of the market.

The rural areas in the Republic of Moldova face significant challenges in terms of growth, employment and sustainability. The rural areas are extremely diversified, ranging from remote settlements facing depopulation and shrinking to peri-urban areas facing increased pressure from urban centres. Rural areas are characterised by limited access to basic infrastructure, lower income rates, reduced employment for women and a lack of development for the service sector, compared to urban areas.

## RURALITY (2)

N/A

Share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in rural areas

**Data not recorder at national level**

N/A

Share of people aged 16 and over who reported unmet needs for health care in the previous 12 months due to expense, distance to travel or length of waiting list in rural areas

**Data not recorder at national level**

4,1%

Unemployment rate, persons aged 15–64, in rural areas, **2017**

22,8%

Share of young people aged 18–24 neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in rural areas, **2017**

Source: National Statistics



## NATIONAL POLICIES RELATING TO RURAL MOBILITY AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In the Republic of Moldova several documents establish the national development priorities for the transport sector and rural development, but there is no dedicated policy for rural mobility or providing rural transport services. There is a gap between planning documents when it comes to rural mobility. The national transport planning documents focus on strategic national developments, while the rural development planning documents are limited in scope and support the development of local basic infrastructure, i.e. local roads.

The Government of Moldova has made a committed decision to pursue a strategy of export-oriented economic growth, established by the national development strategy "Moldova 2020". The strategy is built around seven priorities, with infrastructure being defined as one of the critical areas. Furthermore, the Moldovan transport infrastructure network is integrated at an international level to several transport planning agreements and policies.

At national level, the most relevant document for the transport sector is the Transport and Logistics

The main priorities for rural development in Moldova are established by the National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for the 2014–2020 period, approved by the Government Decision No. 409 from 4 June 2014. More than 50% of the measures contained in the Action plan of the Strategy have been successfully implemented according to schedule. The strategy is mostly focused on the development of agriculture and associated activities, with one objective for improving employment and living conditions in rural areas. The corresponding specific objectives cover: (i) improving basic infrastructure and services in rural areas, (ii) developing opportunities for the labour force and increasing rural revenues, (iii) increasing local communities' involvement in rural development.

Furthermore, several programmes supported by external donors, are using an approach similar to the LEADER programme for supporting rural development. All projects are under the guidance, coordination and monitoring of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, and many organizations work on site throughout the country to support the development of local partnerships.



Photo from Shutterstock

Development Strategy for the years 2013–2022 approved by the Government Decision no. 827 from 28 October 2013, with specific objectives including ensuring access to national roads from local rural roads in all localities of the country, ensuring the repair and maintenance of over 6 thousand kilometres of local roads by 2022. The strategy does not address the provision of mobility services in rural areas.

No policies for improving the access to healthcare services outside the locality could be identified. The Ministry of Education has implemented a programme supporting school transport in rural areas in order to improve the accessibility to primary and secondary education.

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Republic of Moldova has a mixed system of government. It has a dual executive consisting of a President, Prime Minister, Council of Ministers and a unicameral legislature. The new constitution introduced the institutional framework of Moldova's current political system. It also provides substantial autonomy to the regions of Transnistria and Gagauzia.

The government's task is to implement the domestic and foreign policy of the nation, based on a guiding programme of activities approved by the Parliament.

In the republic of Moldova, rural mobility is included in the wider sector of transport planning for which the Ministries are responsible for regulating and planning at national level and their decentralised units and specialized technical institutions are responsible for route and operator licencing and accreditation. Responsibilities for rural mobility are not consolidated but rather spread across multiple ministries and

decentralised units from different sectors: transport, regional and rural development.

The regulations are established at national level (i.e. ministries), the planning priorities are established at national level and detailed at district local level (i.e. City Halls and City Councils, District Councils) and the implementation is conducted at district or local level.

Some actions have been carried out in 2017 to integrate several sectors within the central government. In this process, responsibilities for the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport and Road Infrastructure and Ministry of Regional Development and Construction have been consolidated into the newly formed Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure. Furthermore, responsibilities for rural development, agriculture and environmental protection have been brought together within the newly formed Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

There are several laws that regulate the transport sector in the Republic of Moldova. The most relevant laws for the rural mobility services are **Code 150 / 17.07.2014 Road Transport** and **HGM854/2006 Government Decision regarding the Regulation for Passenger and Luggage Transportation**.

Code 150 Road Transport establishes the legal responsibilities of the ministry which covers road transport and its subordinated authorities, together with cooperation responsibilities for enforcing the current law. Furthermore, the Code provides the legal framework for the establishment, authorization, organization and operation of passenger transport services carried out by private or public companies for rural and urban localities.

The Code also establishes the requirements and responsibilities for developing and managing urban, rural and intercity public transport systems. The local, municipal and district councils are responsible for establishing a Commission delegated to organize regular passenger transport services and approving operating regulations. Based on individual prerogatives established for these Commissions they can either have power of final approval for the regulations or need a final approval from the Councils.

The local and municipal councils are responsible, within their territory, with developing medium and long term strategies for the development and upgrade of road transport. District councils are responsible for the provision and development of passenger transport services, within the territorial limits of the districts and should coordinate with local and municipal councils to ensure correlation of district and local services.

HGM854/2006 provides the classification of transport services permitted within the country and the requirements for organizing each type of transport. Based on the act, community transport can be provided: (i) on regular routes, (ii) on occasion, (iii) on demand, and (iv) for tourism. The law also establishes the maximum frequency for suburban services done on regular routes at the district level, the time between consecutive routes should be larger than 15 minutes.

There is freedom of entry to the market for rural mobility services. All companies registered in the Republic of Moldova can be included in the Road Transport Operators Registry if they fulfil several conditions. The local, municipal and district councils are obliged to ensure a fair treatment, competition and transparency for all passenger road transport operators.

## ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The main general mobility services in rural areas are community transport services, provided either by public or private operators. The public operators cover only the city of Chisinau and partially the surrounding area (i.e. Chisinau municipality), while private operators cover the remaining of the Chisinau municipality and the districts. The general mobility services available in rural areas are bus services (coaches or minibuses), while Chisinau municipality also uses trolleybuses. According to the Transport and Logistics Strategy for 2013–2022, 1250 transport operators were registered for the provision of passenger services for urban and rural areas. In practice there appears to be a significant number of unregistered transport operators (roughly estimated around 20–25%) who provide services for the general public.

The railway infrastructure, used for passenger transport, provides coverage mostly for urban areas, especially for connections between district centres and the capital Chisinau. A public operator provides the railway services.

The main targeted mobility service available in rural areas is the School transport that provides transportation for pupils. The service was launched as part of the Educational reform that led to the reorganization of district schools, lengthening travel distances for pupils to 3–10 kilometres. This service is managed by the Ministry of Education.

The main challenge for the provision of quality rural mobility services is the poor quality of road infrastructure. The national infrastructure was visually evaluated in 2006 and the main conclusions stated that 67.58 % of the main road network and about 80% of the secondary network needed urgent repairs. The roads not needing repairs on the short term and classified as being in good condition were very few, less than 2% of the main network and less than 0.1 % of the secondary network. Actions were taken to improve the state of road infrastructure, but the 2013 Transport and Logistics Strategy assessed the local roads as critical with only 22% of the total length classified as being in good or mediocre condition, while the rest was in bad or very bad condition.

There are 2 main types of movement for work or economic activities between rural areas and urban centres: (i) the largest cities in the country (i.e. Chisinau, Balti and Cahul) attract weekly commuters from all over the country, who travel there during the week and return

to their residence during the weekends, (ii) the other district centres (smaller cities) attract daily commuters. This dual pattern of travel is a consequence of the development standstill faced by some district centres, diminishing their attractiveness to the workforce.

Inter-urban regular passenger services are provided from 3 main stations in Chisinau and 26 district stations, and there are over 3000 national routes registered. More than 21.000 coaches and minibuses are registered countrywide, but around 95% of vehicles have been in use for more than 10 years and some vehicles are registered for freight transport. The provision of services is irregular and not adapted to the demand, there is no organised ticketing and passengers have to be at the bus stop at least one hour in advance in order to ensure getting a place in the 12 – 20 seat vehicles. Besides these services, a parallel market of collective transport is organised (by cars or minivans), but with few guarantees to reach any particular destination and prices are freely negotiated. Due to the limited rural transport services, some companies are providing transportation for their workers.

The final segment of the journey remains highly problematic if it is located in rural areas. Taxi or individual car owners often do not accept travelling out to localities not connected to the main network by roads with a paved surface. In case of bad weather or during the night, a large part of the population is cut off from any collective (public or private) transport network. These observations are corroborated by several analysis, for example a household survey carried out in 2003 in rural communities in Moldova by ECORYS already showed that poor roads and transportation was considered the worst problem faced by communities and villages.

## FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

There seems to be no dedicated funding for rural mobility. The rural local budget is provided in a global way, without dedicated funding for different sectors. Funds are directly allocated from the state budget to the district budgets and in particular cases, where urban centres are also responsible for surrounding rural areas (i.e. Chisinau), the local budget receives funds from the district.

Funding for rural mobility can be achieved from multiple funding sources, either for the transport sector or rural development. The main funding sources for investments in rural mobility are national funds. Some European structural funds have been introduced in previous years, but none were identified for mobility services, but rather infrastructure.

Rural mobility services do not appear to be considered an investment priority for the national government, most likely due to the poor quality of road infrastructure. The prerequisite for good passenger transport services is good and well-maintained transport infrastructure, so the Republic of Moldova focuses current resources on upgrading and improving the road infrastructure.

National funding programmes addressing rural areas or mobility:

- Good Roads for Moldova – the program aims to rehabilitate or modernize about 1355 Kilometres of roads, covering about 1200 localities. It is considered a programme dedicated to the ongoing maintenance of the road infrastructure. The funds allocated for the project are approx. 1.6 billion Moldavian Lei (MDL), approx. 80.990.000 EUR. It is a programme of high interest for the country and it has a dedicated website registering the targets and their fulfilment (i.e. <http://drumuribune.md>).
- National Fund for the Development of Agriculture – was regulated for the 2017-2021 period, but provides support for the development of agriculture and the associated economic sector.

The Republic of Moldova also benefits for external support from several donors, but dedicated support for rural mobility has not been identified during the analysis. Also, the country intensified its relations with the European Union as it joined the EU's Eastern Partnership in 2009 and the EU-Moldova Association Agreement entered into force on 1 July 2016.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The capital city, Chisinau, and the surrounding localities (i.e. towns and villages) have a special organizational structure compared to the rest of the country. Chisinau has a local administration for the city, but also a "municipal" administration which governs the association between the city and surrounding localities.

The municipal administration operates at the same level of the districts and is regulated by the Law no. 136/17.06.2016 concerning the status of Chisinau municipality. There are 18 local administrations associated in the municipal structure, together with Chisinau city, out of which 6 towns and 12 villages/communes. Public transport is planned at the city level and at the municipal level. Chisinau city has started the development of a sustainable urban mobility plan, the first in the country, but the plan does not appear to be extended to the municipal territory.

The transport services provided to the rural areas are trolleybus, bus and minibus ("maxi-taxi") and all localities are serviced by one or more modes. Based on available maps, the bus network is the most extended, followed by the minibus and then trolleys and in many cases the services are competing with each other. The bus and trolley bus services are provided by 2 distinct public operators while the minibus services are private. There is no fare integration between modes, but the public operators provide some fare reductions for selected user groups.



## KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND MINISTRIES ADDRESSING RURAL AREAS

TITLE	ROLE
<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment</b>	The Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment is the central government authority responsible for the implementation of state policy in the following sectors: rural and regional development, agriculture and associated activities and environmental protection and natural resources. Furthermore, the ministry is responsible with the development and promotion of policies for sustainable development of the agri-food sector and rural areas. The ministry is supported by subordinated institutions, such as the Agency for Payments and Interventions in Agriculture. The current ministry was reformed in 2017 by merging responsibilities from the previous Ministry of Agriculture and food industry, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Regional Development and Construction.
<b>Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure</b>	The Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure has responsibilities for the implementation of state policy in several sectors: transport and associated infrastructure, urban planning and construction, energy, business environment, commerce, industry, investment and export. The current ministry was reformed in 2017 by merging responsibilities from the previous Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport and Road Infrastructure and Ministry of Regional Development and Construction.
<b>Agency for Payments and Interventions in Agriculture (AIPA)</b>	The Agency was founded in 2010 as an institution in the subordination of the Ministry of Agriculture, with the main purpose of managing financial resources (subsidies) aimed at supporting the farmers, to monitor their distribution and also the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the impact of implemented measures. Currently the agency manages funding from the National Fund for Agriculture and Rural Development. As a result of AIPA's ability to manage funding granted by foreign donors, the agency plans to get the accreditation in order to comply with EU requirements.
<b>National Agency for Road Transport</b>	The National Agency for Road Transport is the authority which ensures the implementation of public policies and national development strategies for road transport. The agency is also responsible for the control and monitoring of compliance with national and international transport legislation for all private and public operators licenced for supplying road transport services.
<b>Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM)</b>	The institution was established in 2010 as a non commercial entity, with the purpose of being a representative of all local authorities in Moldova. CALM is composed of administrative territorial units, either cities or communes, and several professional associations. The Congress aims to be an important partner during the decentralization process in Moldova and to offer valuable support to all local administrations. CALM has established partnerships with the The Romanian Association of Communes, European Council of Municipalities and Regions and Committee of Regions.

## LINKS TO WEBSITES

---

- Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment - [www.madrm.gov.md](http://www.madrm.gov.md)
- Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure - <https://mei.gov.md>
- Republic of Moldova, official website - <http://moldova.md/ro>
- Agency for Payments and Interventions in Agriculture (AIPA) - [www.aipa.gov.md/ro](http://www.aipa.gov.md/ro)
- National Agency for Road Transport - <https://anta.gov.md>
- Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM) - <http://calm.md/index.php?l=en>
- Chisinau Municipality, official website (Romanian language) - [www.chisinau.md/index.php?l=ro](http://www.chisinau.md/index.php?l=ro)

## REFERENCES

---

- Administrative structure of the country  
[www.moldova.md/en/content/administrative-territorial-organization-moldova](http://www.moldova.md/en/content/administrative-territorial-organization-moldova)
- Legislation – the Road Transport Code for the Republic of Moldova, Romanian language  
<http://lex.justice.md/md/354404>
- Legislation – HGM854/2006 regarding the Regulation for Passenger and Luggage Transportation, Romanian language - <http://lex.justice.md/md/316972>
- Legislation – Law no. 136/17.06.2016 concerning the administrative status of Chisinau municipality, Romanian language - <http://lex.justice.md/md/366632>
- Transport and Logistics Strategy for 2013-2022 - <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=350111>
- National strategy for Agriculture and rural development for the 2014-2020 period - <http://lex.justice.md/md/353310>
- Public transport schedule for district services, Romanian language - <https://anta.gov.md/content/rute-regulate>
- National Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Moldova - [www.statistica.md/index.php?l=en](http://www.statistica.md/index.php?l=en)
- The complex structure of transport in Chisinau – Transport analysis of Chisinau municipality, Romanian language  
[www.chisinau.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=619&t=/Utile/Transport/Schema-Complexa-a-transporturilor-din-Chisinau](http://www.chisinau.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=619&t=/Utile/Transport/Schema-Complexa-a-transporturilor-din-Chisinau)