

**Information for the preparation of Study on the solutions to promote digital education for young people and to ensure their protection from online threats – Human Rights Council  
Resolution 51/17**

**1) What are the main challenges that young people in your country face in accessing digital education? Please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response.**

Accessing digital education in Moldova presents several challenges for young people, especially those who are marginalized or in vulnerable situations. Here are some of the main challenges they face:

- **Limited Access to Technology:** young people, particularly those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, lack access to essential digital tools like computers, smartphones, and reliable internet connections. This along with the costs of devices and internet access are a problem for fully engaging in digital education platforms and accessing online resources.

- **Digital Literacy Gaps:** Marginalized youth may lack the necessary digital literacy skills to navigate online learning platforms effectively. Without adequate training and support, they may struggle to utilize digital resources for educational purposes, further widening the educational gap between them and their more privileged peers.

- **Limited Access to Support Services:** Marginalized youth often require additional support services, such as special education resources, counseling, or accommodations for disabilities. Accessing these services remotely through digital platforms can be challenging, particularly in areas where infrastructure and resources are limited.

- **Limited Content Accessibility:** Digital educational content may not always be accessible or inclusive for marginalized youth, particularly those with disabilities. This lack of accessibility can create barriers to learning and hinder their educational progress.

- **Shortage of teachers and trainers.** In order to tackle this issue, according to the MoER Action Plan in 2024, with the support of UNICEF, about 5000 teaching staff will benefit of continuous training on development of digital skills (DigCompEdu).

The crises because of the Covid19 pandemic and Ukrainian war were turned into positive opportunities for short-term learning recovery and resilience, paving the way for an equitable and efficient growth path. Currently, 49821 laptops/PCs and 5931 tablets are used in the teaching process. 400 schools are implementing electronic registers.

The influx of refugee children has created additional capacity challenges for local institutions to deliver basic services. Addressing learning recovery programs, while also delivering main educational services to all local and refugee children needs continuous additional support, including increased digital capacity for teaching and learning and socio-emotional support for these students.

Within the last decade, the MoER has made continuous efforts to develop and upgrade the EMIS (Education Management of Information System), starting with general education, and recently expanding to VET institutions, HEIs, and preschools. Specifically, the module for Early Childhood Education Institutions was created and an electronic catalog was developed in EMIS. IT and STEM lab equipment have been provided to schools. Efforts have been made to digitalize learning content with video libraries to ensure free and unrestricted access for all students. Finally, the MoER has also sought to provide more schools with high-speed broadband internet.

Electronic data sources relevant for education are also produced by the MoER and its agencies, such as through a gamut of digital learning resources at [www.educatieonline.md](http://www.educatieonline.md) and teacher manuals at [www.ctice.md](http://www.ctice.md). Information on students from vulnerable households as well as information about NEEs may be held in other ministry agencies such as those related to the labor market and social benefits.

**2) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that digital education is accessible and promoted among young people? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes directed at ensuring young people's universal access to digital education**

Digital transformation is set as a priority in the current governance program. **The digital transformation strategy of the Republic of Moldova for the years 2023-2030**, approved by GD 650/2023 [https://mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STD\\_RO.pdf](https://mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STD_RO.pdf) describes the directions of digital transformation of the country and adapts the objectives, priorities, indicators and targets of the international commitments undertaken by the Republic of Moldova to the national context, including the Association Agreement Republic of Moldova - European Union and commitments which derives from the status of a candidate country for EU accession, but also the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The "**Education 2030**" **development strategy** and the "**Education 2030**" **development strategy implementation program**, approved by GD 114/2023, [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=136600&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136600&lang=ro) are drawn up in accordance with the following documents: "European Moldova 2030" national development strategy, UN Sustainable Development Goals, Republic of Moldova Association Agreement - European Union, etc.

The legal framework in the field of education is mainly regulated by the Education Code (in force since November 23, 2014) [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=130514&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130514&lang=ro), as well as by other legislative acts and government orders:

- **The Education Code** (Law no. 152/2014, art. 11, letter 1), in the second part of article 11, the digital competence is indicated along with the other 8 key competences that the educational system aims to develop. Also, the same normative act establishes that in the Republic of Moldova, at the national level, virtual school libraries can be created with electronic learning functions, school curriculum, didactic projects, methodological guides, electronic textbooks, etc.

- The Ministry adopted the **Digital Competence Standards for Education Teachers** DigComEdu [https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin\\_competente\\_digcompedu\\_compressed\\_1.pdf](https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_competente_digcompedu_compressed_1.pdf)), which provides a general reference frame to support the development of educator specific digital competences in Europe. Also, the VET institutions with the support of external partners piloted and started to implement the SELFIE (Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational technologies) which is a free tool designed to help schools embed digital technologies into teaching, learning and assessment. With the support of European experts, a website [www.iptdigital.md](http://www.iptdigital.md) was developed as a repository for digital learning materials for teachers and students from VET system. Digital competences of VET teachers from Centers of Excellence were strengthened with the idea that they are becoming disseminators of information across the network of VET institutions.

- **Standards of digital skills of primary, secondary and high school students** [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4\\_final\\_competente\\_digitale\\_elevi\\_22iulie2015\\_1.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/cnc4_final_competente_digitale_elevi_22iulie2015_1.pdf)

- **Minimum standards for equipping primary, secondary and high schools with ICT** [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin\\_489\\_din\\_070519\\_standarde\\_minime\\_de\\_dotare\\_cu\\_tic.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_489_din_070519_standarde_minime_de_dotare_cu_tic.pdf)

The minimum ICT standards apply to all schools in the Republic of Moldova and specify the minimum criteria and requirements that must be respected in the decision-making process regarding the purchase of ICT means. The purpose of their implementation is to streamline the process of selecting the computing technique, intended to ensure the educational process in education. When evaluating the educational institution, in the accreditation process, the assurance of all standards is checked.

- **Minimum standards for equipping cabinets for school subjects in general education institutions** [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/standarde\\_dotarecabinetescolarefinalordin.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/standarde_dotarecabinetescolarefinalordin.pdf)

The standards for the minimum equipment of the cabinets for school subjects in general education institutions is the document which prescribes the standards for the equipment of the school cabinets with the minimum necessary equipment, in order to strengthen the quality of education by supporting the reforms in general education, but also in increasing the value of skills development.

### 3) **What steps is the Government taking to ensure that young people can realize their human rights online in a safe, empowering, and inclusive way?**

During the pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Research developed several regulatory documents for the development of a safe educational process in the online environment:

- **Order no. 1131 of 13.10.2020** regarding the approval of the methodological benchmarks regarding the organization of the educational process in the conditions of mixed learning in the epidemiological context of COVID-19, for primary, secondary and high school education institutions [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/repere\\_inv\\_mixta.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/repere_inv_mixta.pdf);
- **Order no. 1069 of 06.10.2020** regarding the approval of methodological guidelines regarding the online security and safety of students in the distance education process for primary, secondary and high school education institutions [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/img20201007\\_13332167.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/img20201007_13332167.pdf)
- **Order no. 840 of 19.08.2020** – special regulations regarding the organization of the 2020-2021 academic year, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, for primary, secondary, high school and extracurricular educational institutions [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/doc\\_baza\\_1.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/doc_baza_1.pdf).

**National policy documents** regulating actions aimed at promoting the safety of children online:

- *The digital transformation strategy of the Republic of Moldova for the years 2023-2030*, (Government Decision 650/2023), [https://mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STD\\_RO.pdf](https://mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STD_RO.pdf).
- *Information security strategy of the Republic of Moldova for the years 2019-2024 and the action plan for its implementation* (Parliament Decision no. 257/2018) [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=111979&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=111979&lang=ro).
- *Action plan for the years 2016-2020 regarding the implementation of the Strategy for child protection for the years 2014-2020* [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=18628&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=18628&lang=ro)
- *The action plan regarding the promotion of Internet safety for children and adolescents for the years 2017-2020* (Government Decision no. 212/2017) [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=109701&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=109701&lang=ro)
- *Recommendations regarding the self-regulation of the Internet content filtering service with a negative impact on children provided by publicly accessible Internet access service providers* (Government Decision no. 115/2018). **The general policy framework and international commitments of the Republic of Moldova**
- **Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse** (Lanzarote Convention);
- UN 2030 Agenda <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> .

In order to create a minimum framework of actions that can be taken by general education institutions to strengthen their efforts in promoting online safety, creating a safe and protected environment for the child/student, establishing information measures for teachers, parents and children/students about online safety, it is proposed to approve the Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment and their implementation in all general

education institutions in the country (Order no. 985 of 07.10.2022 [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin\\_aprobare\\_sso\\_2022.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_aprobare_sso_2022.pdf) ).

**4) What are the main gaps and challenges to young people's protection from online threats in law, policy, and practice in your country and the impacts on young people's human rights? Please consider the specific situation of marginalized young people and those in vulnerable situations in your response**

In the Republic of Moldova, online safety is an actual issue. National studies indicate that children use the Internet more often, communicate and socialize more, thus being exposed to the risks of contact and behavior in the virtual environment (online harassment, sexting, sexual abuse, etc.). The Internet has become an integral part of the daily life of children in the Republic of Moldova. Most children are connected to the Internet almost all the time, or at least several times a day. According to the study carried out in 2021 by CI "La Strada" regarding the online experiences of children in the Republic of Moldova and the risks they are exposed to, every second child is always connected to the Internet at home and surfs online alone, unsupervised. The older the child, the more time he spends online unsupervised. Among children aged 9–11, 25% are always connected to the Internet when they are alone. The number of teenagers who surf online when they are alone is much higher: 53% of respondents aged 12–14 and 67% of respondents aged 15–17. With the increase in age of children, especially in the age group of 15-17 years, there is a tendency to access the Internet several times a day or, almost all the time and from several places: at home, at friends or relatives, in public places, when going somewhere (on the street or in transport), as well as at school.

At the same time, every fourth child learned something new from the Internet, searching for information online. The share of children who use the Internet almost all the time to learn something new is higher among 15-17-year-olds compared to 9-11-year-olds. At the same time, 14% of 9-11 year olds reported that they do not know what information can be posted or transmitted to someone and what information should not be sent to anyone via the Internet. These data point to the need to address topics related to privacy and security settings in discussions with young children, right from their first contact with digital technologies. 35% of the children interviewed stated that at least once they had chatted on the Internet with a person they had not met in real life. Also, during the conducted research, it was found that, exploring the Internet, children faced the following problems: they accidentally opened images or video sequences of a sexual nature while searching for some information on the Internet - 13%; received messages containing vulgar words or images with sexual content - 12%; they received humiliating messages in their address on applications such as Messenger, Viber, Forum, Chatroom – 12%; someone cracked their password and accessed their personal information to impersonate someone else – 9%. The multiple risks to which children are exposed in the online environment are closely related to the minimum level of involvement of their parents in online safety education, the sporadic and superficial approach to the subject of online safety within the educational institution, but also with insufficient information of the general public about online risks and the support services they can turn to in the event of online abuse.

**5) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that young people are protected from online threats? Please provide examples of specific laws and regulations, measures, policies, and programmes.**

In 2022, the MoER approved the *Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment*, which are based on the Quality Standards for primary and general secondary

education institutions from the perspective of child-friendly schools and are similarly structured in three areas: Management, Institutional capacity, Curriculum/educational process.

The following documents were taken into account when developing the Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment:

- *The Council of Europe recommendations on the promotion of digital citizenship education*, through which critical thinking skills and competences aimed at contributing to the safety of children in the online environment are developed in a systemic way ([https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=090000168098de08](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=090000168098de08) )

- *The recommendations of the OECD* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and the European Commission's DigCompOrg European Digital Competence Framework, regarding the comprehensive approach to online safety by educational institutions, assuming the integration of online safety in all aspects of school activity, in all policies, procedures and school processes [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/european-framework-digitally-competent-educational-organisations-digcomporg\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/european-framework-digitally-competent-educational-organisations-digcomporg_en).

- *The Digital Education Action Plan*, developed and approved by the European Commission, which emphasizes how important online safety and "digital hygiene" are in the context of developing digital skills <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:22:FIN#footnoteref21>.

Also, the Methodological Guide on the implementation of the Safety Standards for children/students in the online environment was developed by the MEC and CI "La Strada", in order to effectively implement the Standards for the protection and safety of children/students in the online environment.

The International Centre La Strada is operating [www.siguronline.md](http://www.siguronline.md), an informational and awareness-raising platform on safer internet issues, which provides online counseling and support in cases of online abuse. The website is widely promoted during the national Safer Internet Day Campaign, in schools, among children, teachers, and parents. As well, each year, La Strada in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research encourages the involvement of teachers in promoting safety online, by conducting a national contest.

An age verification functionality is in place for electronic public services. This is done, at the authentication stage, through an on-line verification of the identity of the potential applicant with the data that is contained in the State Registry of Population.

Other relevant achievements of MoER:

- Didactic resources (didactic scenarios, video lessons) were developed for primary and secondary school teachers. All resources are available online on the portal [www.siguronline.md](http://www.siguronline.md), in the "Teaching Resources" category and <https://educatieonline.md> in the "Video Lessons" category.

- Informational resources were developed for teachers (articles, guides, etc.), available on the [www.siguronline.md](http://www.siguronline.md) portal, in the "Informational Resources" category.

- Methodological milestones regarding the online security and safety of students in the distance education process (2020, [https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/img20201007\\_13332167.pdf](https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/img20201007_13332167.pdf))

- National Digital Literacy Program for teachers (2020, 2021);

- The integration of topics related to online safety into the curriculum, to mandatory but also optional subjects (Personal development; Digital education; Media education; Computer science; Education for society, etc.) (2018/2019).

Other resources are available on the MoER website: <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/siguranta-copiilor-internet>.