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Joint Pilot Programme

Mainstreaming of Migration into Development (MOMID) in Moldova

Outcomes of the Moldovan diaspora policy seminar



Chişinău
19 July 2012

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I. ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIPATION

Organized and hosted by:

State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova

In collaboration with:

International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

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Expert advisers:

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Participants:

National line ministries/agencies

Ministry of Interior (Including Bureau on Migration and Asylum, Border Police), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (including Department for Consular Affairs), Ministry of Labour Social Protection and Family (including National Employment Agency), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Bureau on Interethnic Relations, National Bank of Moldova, Bureau on Statistics, State Chancellery of Moldova.

International/Donors Organizations/Foreign Missions

EU Delegation to Moldova, ILO, IOM OHCHR, Public Employment Service, Romanian Embassy, SDC, Swedish Public Employment Service, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WB, WHO.

NGOs/Academia/Think Tanks

Diaspora members (from Italy, France, US), Moldovan Academy of Science, Migration Policy Institute, IDIS “Viitorul”, CBS-AXA.

Media

TV Moldova International, Radio Moldova.

Total number of participants:

63

II. BACKGROUND

As part of a series of Diaspora-dedicated policy events held over the last years, the Moldovan Government hosted on 19th of July 2012 a Diaspora Policy Seminar with participation of experts and officials of countries with advanced Diaspora engagement models, as well as of Diaspora representatives themselves. The event focused on exploring ways for increased participation of Moldovan Diaspora in cultural, social, economical and political homeland processes, on protecting rights of migrants and their descendants abroad, as well as on appropriate institutional framework to ensure effective communication.

The State Chancellery proposed for public consultation a draft regulation for a Diaspora agency beginning June, and the event offered a platform for joint dialogue on the proposal among multiple stakeholders and with the presence of selected Diaspora representatives and invited specialists on Diaspora engagement from official and non-governmental backgrounds. Discussions evidenced widely diverging expectations ranging from Diaspora voices for a full-fledged Ministry in charge of Diaspora matters both in terms of policies and operational activity, while a more targeted and resource-aware approach articulated around coordination and communication functions is advocated by national institutions and development partners.

The consultations equally drew upon the evidence-base and results of two recent Diaspora-Mapping Studies carried out by IOM in Italy, France, Russia, Spain, and UK – some of the main destination countries of Moldovans - which revealed the socio-economic profile of Moldovan Diaspora and policy challenges. A series of Diaspora engagement models have also been presented by officials and experts from Armenia, Macedonia and the Migration Policy Institute. Over ten representatives of the Moldovan Diaspora have also provided inputs on their interests and concerns, four of which were sponsored based on their innovative proposal papers for diaspora policies earlier submitted to the State Chancellery in an open competition.

Following the Seminar IOM assumed the lead on developing a substantive outcome document, reflecting both seminar discussions and technical recommendations, including concrete action proposals. These were coordinated with and endorsed by the Government focal point and the UN Country Team Migration Mainstreaming Working Group and the consolidated outcomes will further be fed into the National Migration Mainstreaming Proposal and into the support to the conceptualization of a government entity dedicated to diaspora matters and engagement (hereinafter “Diaspora Agency”).

Since the Seminar, the Government of Moldova, through the Decision nr. 780 of October 19 2012, operated modifications in the Regulation of the State Chancellery establishing a Bureau for Diaspora Relations and the present recommendations will further serve as a reference for its setup and future activities.

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A. General Observations/Recommendations

1. Participants agreed that detailed, **up-to-date and country/community-specific information on the socio-economic profile of the diaspora is crucial** for efficient policy responses and effective action. IOM's series of Diaspora Mappings in five major destination countries was welcomed as bringing a base of robust evidence to inform such policy making.
2. Calls were made to extend the diaspora mapping exercise to further destination countries and to regularly update the Mapping Reports, while ensuring a link with the Extended Migration Profile as well as exchanges with the host countries of the studied diaspora in view of raising positive awareness.
3. Participants made calls to the diaspora and its representatives to devote further efforts to unify and consolidate the approaches and activities of diaspora associations, creating **intra-diaspora networks of partnership and information exchange**, at country and global levels.
4. Only a **diaspora united by mutual trust and a common sense of purpose** will be a credible rallying and supporting point for different groups of migrants, regardless of their legal status abroad, temporary or permanent emigration plans, and profile of sex, age, occupation, ethnic origin, country of destination and finally generation abroad.
5. Thought has been given, on the other hand, to the fact that the **State and its authorities manifestly possess a limited capital of trust with migrants themselves and diaspora associations**. In order to attain concurrence of migrants and the diaspora with Moldova's human and economic development aims, such trust should be built by engaging diaspora communities as **equal partners** and by creating sustained communication with migrants – directly and through the intermediary of diaspora associations – in view of their and their descendants' inclusion in cultural, social, economical and political homeland processes.
6. Such an approach is most efficiently operationalised by a streamlining of the interaction between various stakeholders through **one focal point or one-stop-shop**, providing a multidirectional interface and platform of exchange. It has been recommended that the Diaspora Agency shall assume such a central facilitative role.
7. The use of **modern electronic communication means and social media** as efficient and cost-neutral instruments for an enhanced and more regular government-diaspora interaction was repeatedly suggested.
8. One of the key priorities in Moldova's support for its diaspora should be **advocacy for migrants' economic and social rights in the destination countries**. The protection of these rights should be the cornerstone of Moldova's bilateral relations with these countries. Moldovan diplomatic missions should be enabled to protect the citizens in other countries from inter alia arbitrary detention, violence and discrimination.

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9. The **gender dimension** of migration should receive heightened attention at all stages of diaspora policy formulation, implementation and monitoring/evaluation.

B. Recommendations to Diaspora Activists/Associations and Policies to Promote Diaspora Networks, as well as Diaspora Involvement and Identification with the Homeland

1. Diaspora Associations are recommended to join efforts and adopt integrative approaches in areas of presence of numerous smaller associations, either through the merging of associations or the creation of **country/regional umbrella associations or federations** with a coordination function.
2. Diaspora Associations are recommended to engage into ways of **thematic specialisation** rather than adopting an across-the-board mission statement at the present early stage of capacity development and limited availability of resources. Such thematic specialisation could bear on: assisting (irregular) migrants in difficulties and/or advocating for migrants' rights in host communities; promoting cultural and linguistic heritage and the image of Moldova abroad; homeland co-development projects; promoting youth movements or professional body formation; ensuring diaspora participation/representation in governance processes in Moldova etc.
3. The Diaspora Agency in conjunction with the Diaspora Coordination Council could provide advice in the choice of specialisation, division of labour and coordination between various Diaspora Associations as well as on current priorities for action.
4. In the medium to long term, Diaspora Associations are called to engage into **partial professionalization** of their leaders/activists, strive for financial self-sustainability and draw upon identified donors/funding sources as well as member fees/donations to ensure adequate remuneration of the latter.
5. Diaspora Associations are urged to adopt **modern project development and management approaches** and standards, including rigorous provisions of transparency and accountability to members and external donors/contributors.
6. A **standard of minimum management and accountability standards for Diaspora Associations** may be developed by the Diaspora Agency and development partner(s) with a recognizable **compliance label**. A Diaspora Associations' monitoring focal point within the Diaspora Agency may follow activities and applied standards within Diaspora Associations and standard-compliant associations should receive technical support with registering and managing NGOs, fund-raising, media campaigns, educational and cultural programming, and social protection, etc.
7. Standard-compliant associations would furthermore benefit of Diaspora Agency's and relevant international organizations' assistance in: devising and implementing their resource mobilization strategies through issuing of guarantee/support letters and (co) funding search with prospective donors; A project development assistance and review unit or "**Project Surgery Point**" established within the Diaspora Agency

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could further assist diaspora associations to develop their project ideas, including Budget,.

8. The establishment of an **annual tender for Diaspora Association projects**, with call for proposals and priorities, focusing inter alia on partnerships with Moldova-based civil society, to be co-funded by Moldova through the Diaspora Agency, an own in-kind contribution of Diaspora Associations and a (multi-donor) fund should furthermore be pursued.
9. An **annual Award Gala of a diaspora leader**, whose association contributed in an innovative and efficient way to strengthening ties between the community and Moldova and/or supported the development of homeland and diaspora communities should be organized to promote recognition of personal merits and stimulate emulation of altruistic approaches.

C. Recommendations on the Diaspora Agency and Institutional Arrangements for Diaspora Programming as well as specific thematic/sectorial policy recommendations

1. The Moldovan Diaspora Agency shall promote and represent towards migrants and diaspora a unified government approach, a **Single Entry, Contact and Service/where applicable Referral Point (One-stop-shop)**, and allow for the Diaspora voice to be heard and its interests, rights and concerns be taken into account and factored in the policies and legislation developed in the Republic of Moldova, including by institutions serving directly or indirectly migrants of various groups, including potential emigrants, returned migrants, potential return migrants, diaspora entrepreneurs, migrants organised in profession-specific networks etc.
2. The Diaspora Agency is recommended to engage into deliberate, continuous communication and dialogue with the diaspora, as a “spokesperson of the Government of Moldova” and ensure mutual **feed-back transmission between the subjects of Diaspora policy making and institutions** making and implementing policies related to Diaspora as well as afferent domains, such as labour migration. The Diaspora Agency shall not only demonstrate increased interest, attention and efforts of the Government towards development and implementation of specific diaspora policies, but act as a “centre of gravitation” for related mandates and institutions and intensify the two-ways connection between the Government of Moldova and the communities of Moldovans abroad.
3. It was observed that diaspora needs “democratization”, i.e. to address the representation issue so that its voice gets as legitimate as possible. The Diaspora Agency could be complemented with a reconfigured **Diaspora Coordination Council**, to be based on **ascertained representativeness of the nominal members**. Through such a consultative framework the Diaspora should be the first to be consulted for relevant policy making alongside with the line ministries. The Diaspora Agency and Council shall develop and implement specific diaspora policies and contribute to develop-

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ment of diaspora-focused policies implemented by line ministries and specialized institutions, and the Diaspora Council if equipped with a permanent secretariat could assume functions of umbrella organization (NGO) in Chisinau for Moldovan Homeland/Migrant Associations would further networking and coordination.

4. In line, also, with the challenge of devising incentives to increase the level and timeliness of consular registration by Moldovan migrants, beyond the promotion of the electronic consular registration option, it was suggested that the one way to ensure representativeness of the Diaspora Council could be to base election of its members on **direct, electronically-based election** by only members of the diaspora registered at consulates. It was suggested that the Diaspora Council should be devised in a gender-balanced way.
5. Diaspora programming by the Diaspora Agency should adopt a broad definition of diaspora, including labour migrants, yet target specifically those international migrants who intend to remain abroad – including **2nd and 3rd generation Moldovans** with a focus on maintaining their identification with Moldova and attraction/circulation of knowledge, skills and material transfers for national capacity building and socio-economic as well as good governance development of the country – while generally contributing to analysis and responses to all types of migration from Moldova.
6. The Macedonian system of political representation of Diaspora in the homeland through short-term **Diaspora-elected Parliamentarians** was given attention and calls were made to study further such models and consider their adaptation to Moldova.
7. Calls to consider the additional creation of a Diaspora Youth Council and/or a Public/expert multidisciplinary advisory group were also made. A **movement/system of Moldovan youth emissaries** should also be considered based on the Israeli/Armenian models, receiving training in leadership, Moldovan history/statehood and so on in summer camps, to promote among age group peers homeland volunteering and diaspora activism in respective host countries.
8. A comprehensive, **consultative communication strategy/framework** with the Diaspora Agency at its centre should be devised but making best use of existing functions, structures and instruments, to be built around the following non-exhaustive elements:
 - **www.Diaspora.md /Facebook and other new media** – take-over, forum moderation and news posting by Diaspora Agency, establishing additional/more monitored parameters in the registration system of diaspora associations on diaspora.md;
 - **Consular Diaspora Focal Points** – training in civil society support, event management support (in view of celebration of national festivals and cultural events in destination countries, including art exhibitions, musical events, film festivals, literary events, Moldovan cuisine) etc.; Consulates and embassies should take a broader role in the implementation of Diaspora policies, and should be provided with tools and instruments;

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- **Formal and informal diaspora consultations** with a permanent secretariat - Travelling officials, skype consultations, country/regional diaspora congresses/fora;
 - **Honorary representatives**, cultural/trade promotion emissaries, potentially including non-Moldovan citizens. The cultural and ethno-linguistic diversity in Moldova should be considered as a positive aspect in external tourism, trade etc. promotion;
 - **Improved media coverage and accessibility** – Homeland media to establish “diaspora news” corners/rubriques, open to submissions from diaspora members with insights about diaspora life and its challenges. Moldovan mass media should be more systematically mobilized to provide information to diaspora about developments in Moldova and about relevant policies and programs (e.g. programs related to return). Training may need to be provided to Moldovan journalists to sensitize them to issues of concern for diaspora communities. In addition, Migrant Associations should regularly receive a selection of Moldova’s printed newspapers/journals and/or the Diaspora Agency may edit a Diaspora Newsletter/Paper for the same purpose and disseminate it automatically to migrants registered at consulates by e-mail.
9. The piloting and eventual institutionalising of a **summer training school for diaspora activists** and (potential) diaspora association leaders may be considered. With a programme bearing inter alia on accountancy basics, fund-raising, PR/communication, project development and human rights, the diaspora training school would be concluded with an exit exam and lead to a certification in Diaspora Association Management.
10. It was agreed that offering Moldovan children abroad, specifically 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants, native language classes and supporting educational activities through the formation of youth groups/movements remains a priority. Similarly, the establishment of **Cultural Houses/Centers** should be considered, to be piloted in a location in Northern Italy.
11. In view of resource constraints it is recommended that:
- Diaspora Associations: Seek concurrence from local and central Public Authorities in host countries as well as EU level Civil Society-oriented funding instruments. Combining integration/civic orientation courses into the educational offer may heighten the attractiveness of supporting by host countries.
 - Diaspora Associations: Seek to establish demand-driven fee-for-service sustainability, with a subvention part from the Moldovan Government. Destination country by destination country, quick market studies should be conducted to establish whether a demand for State language tuition by host communities exists or demand for Moldovan cultural products, touristic services etc. Establishment of Tourist Information sections, with promotional materials

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developed by the Ministry of Culture in foreign languages, may increase perspectives of self-sustainability.

- The Diaspora Agency: study practices in the area (Alliance Francaise, Goethe Institut etc.) as well as possible synergies with established structures from Romania.
- The Diaspora Agency: develop and provide nationally-themed language, history, geography manuals adapted for foreign-born Moldovans and other tools needed to implement such educational and cultural programmes.

12. It could be considered to heed the offer of Romania to hold bilateral consultations on cultural cooperation with the diaspora and explore the opportunity for Moldova synergize with Romanian Cultural Institutes worldwide which also promote artists from Moldova and targets Moldovan citizens abroad.
13. **Homeland-Diaspora Social Development Fund:** Based on Armenian experiences, a fund could be established functioning on the principle that raised/donated funds will be invested 50/50 in home-community development (kindergardens, water sanitation, social centres) and in the development of the diaspora community where funds were gathered (supporting schools, cultural centres, youth groups and their trips to Moldova).
14. Organization of **charity/fund-raising events** for the Fund may be articulated around the celebration of national festivals and cultural events in destination countries, including art exhibitions, musical events, film festivals, literary events, Moldovan cuisine, etc., attractive both to Diaspora members and host societies, and should be supported by Moldovan diplomatic missions.
15. **Exchange programs should be considered for diaspora youth** such as academic exchange between universities and schools, and also other forms of structured visits to Moldova should be explored (summer camps, volunteering, sporting events, etc). IOM-piloted short-term professional placements in Moldova's public and private sector for overseas Moldovan graduates should be maintained and expanded.
16. Piloted job fairs in destination countries were discussed and the experience deemed inconclusive, especially in view of the prevailing wage differentials and observed labour abstention rates in Moldova. As a more cost-efficient and broad-reach tool, a **specialised job matching platform** could be developed by the National Employment Agency allowing for highly-qualified diaspora members to post their profile and employers to search for narrowly specialised, shortage qualifications with automatic match-alarm.
17. The PARE 1+1 Programme was discussed as a remarkable instrument for the promotion of remittances' investment and eventual permanent return based on the created livelihood. A call was made to further research, devise, and pilot differing remittances investment or savings schemes, such as bonds for expatriates, tax breaks, special

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saving accounts. **Sub-programmes of PARE with a targeted focus** on geographic areas (rural/north), entrepreneur profiles (women/youth) or economic sector (agri-business, renewable energies etc.) could be developed in order to broaden the spectrum of supporting donors and cater for specific beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable.

18. Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration should organize “**investment/trade fairs**” bringing together Moldovan entrepreneurs in the diaspora and in Moldova, as well as credit/financing agencies.
19. Professional refreshment/re-certification courses should be developed and operated for returning teachers and personnel in the health sector; a comprehensive basket of reintegration measures should be further developed for all socio-professional groups of returning migrants.
20. A crucial point in safeguarding free choice of movement/establishment and reducing barriers for return migration is the further signing of agreements on the **portability of social entitlements/pensions** (Ministry of Labor Social protection and Family). Agreements should also aim at regularizing the professional qualifications/credentials of Moldovan migrants abroad, especially in the EU (Ministry of Education).

Agenda of the Diaspora Policy Seminar and Rationale



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Diaspora Policy Seminar Chişinău, 19 July 2012

Government Building, Conference hall, 6th floor

AGENDA

08.45-09.00 Registration of participants

09.00-09.30 Opening remarks

Victor Lutenco, Prime-Minister's Adviser on social issues

Sergiu Sainciuc, Deputy-Minister, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family

Claude Cahn, United Nations Country Team Human Rights Advisor, Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights

09:30-11:00 Session One: Evidence-Base on Moldovan Diaspora and Current Responses
10 min. Event rationale, scope and agenda

Seminar moderator: Silas Rapold, IOM Migration and Development Programme, UN Moldova Migration Mainstreaming Focal Point

15 min. Historical overview of the Moldovan migration and diaspora evolution

Ghenadie Creţu, IOM Migration and Development Programme Coordinator

25 min. Presentation of Findings of the IOM/WB Report

Moldovan Diaspora Mapping Series # 1:

Moldovans in Russia – Socio-economical profile and policy challenges

Vladimir I. Mukomel, Senior Diaspora Mapping Expert

Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Diaspora Mapping Expert

25 min. Presentation of Preliminary Findings of the IOM Report

Moldovan Diaspora Mapping Series # 2:

Moldovans in the European Union – Italy, France, United Kingdom, Portugal – Socio-economical profile and policy challenges

25 min. Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Diaspora Mapping Expert

Questions & Answers Session

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13.00	Session One continued Tour de table of key Moldovan institutions presenting their current work on diaspora:
Per 10 min.	Vera Pethuhov , Deputy Director, Bureau of Interethnic Relations Vasile Mircos , General Department of Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Valentina Ungureanu , Head Migration Policy Unit, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family Viorica Cerbusca , Deputy Director, National Organization for Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Ministry of Economy
20 min.	Session Two: What Models for Diaspora Ties?
30 min.	Presentations on Existing Country Approaches to Diaspora Lusine Stepanyan , Ministry of Diaspora, Republic of Armenia, Head of the Division for the Relations with Pan-Armenian and International Organizations Reactions, Views and Proposals from the Diaspora Moldovan Diaspora Representatives Questions & Answers Session
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break
14:00-16.00	Session Two continued
Per 20 min.	Kathleen Newland , Co-Founder of the Migration Policy Institute, Washington Nikola Gjorcev , Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Sector for National Priorities Reactions, Views and Proposals from the Diaspora
60 min.	Moldovan Diaspora Representatives: Dorin Dusciac , Association Club Liberal, France Eduard Gherciu , NGO Moldavi Nel Mondo, Italy Dumitru Vicol , Association Jeunes Moldaves, France Ilona Miron , Association Connect Moldova, Italy Questions & Answers Session
16:00- 16:20	Session Three: Way Ahead for Moldova A Vision of the Moldovan Diaspora Agency Victor Lutenco , Advisor on Social Policies to the Prime-Minster
16.20-16.45	Coffee break
16:45- 18.00	Session Three continued Plenary Round-Table Discussion Desired Model for Diaspora Engagement, policies and functionalities thereof Roles and coordination Prioritising Needs and Matching Action Wrap-up and Take-Away Formulation Final Remarks State Chancellery
18.00	Informal Discussions

Event Format/Participation:

- Moldovan Government, Line Ministries
- Extended Migration Profile Technical Working Group Members
- Civil Society, Academia, Think Tanks
- Moldovan Diaspora Leaders/Representatives
- Media Representatives
- EC, UN Agencies, Donors and Development Partners, as relevant
- Officials from countries with advanced Diaspora engagement models

Rationale:

The Diaspora Policy Seminar called by the Moldovan Government is to complement broad consultations on the IOM Extended Migration Profile Report's thematic chapters, organized within the SDC-funded pilot project *Mainstreaming Migration into Development in Moldova (MOMID)*, implemented by the Moldovan Government with UNDP and IOM support.

The overall goal of the Migration Mainstreaming consultations is to foster a “whole-of-government” approach to migration as a major policy issue in view of planning the national development. A comprehensive, focused and inter-sectorially coherent approach is to be developed in a participatory way with a broad range of stakeholders in view of moving public perceptions on migration away from rhetoric stereotypes and streamline support by development partners in efforts to maximize development outcomes of migration and minimize its negative consequences.

Consultations, based on solid evidence and principles are designed to be action-oriented and lead to the joint formulation of inputs and policy follow-up recommendations towards a National Migration Mainstreaming Proposal, addressing the national migration management framework both at policy and coordination levels, and inform as well the ongoing process of United Nations action planning within its Partnership Framework with the Republic of Moldova 2013-17.

The specific judiciousness and timeliness of discussions on the Moldovan Diaspora and communication with it spring from the announced intention of the Moldovan Government of creating a dedicated agency to deal with Diaspora issues, the breadth and exact nature of whose mandates remain to be defined. The Seminar is also to refocus approaches and take stock of changes occurred in the Diaspora's profile since the *Policy Seminar on Diaspora and Homeland Development, organized by IOM Moldova and the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10-11th April 2008*,

which led to the formulation and implementation of a number of policies aimed at maximizing the development benefits of Moldova's relations with its diaspora.

The event is articulated in three Sessions allowing for a pragmatic progression of discussions:

1. In **Session One**, the most up-to-date quantitative and qualitative evidence on the Moldovan Diaspora will be exposed, stemming from a series of IOM sociological researches in five destination countries. Based on quantitative surveys in the destination countries, focus group discussions with migrants of various profiles, and in-depth interviews with Moldovan consuls, diaspora leaders etc., the respective studies present a socio-economic profile and needs of the migrant communities and trends along a multitude of parameters and will provide a basis for the following discussions. To conclude the panorama of the current situation, a concise overview of EU-supported diaspora programming over the period 2008-2012 and lessons learned shall be given by implementing partners.
2. In **Session Two**, invited government officials from countries with advanced Diaspora engagement models and government structures as well as technical specialists of diaspora focused international non-governmental organisations and think-tanks shall present these varying models to the audience, proposing lessons learned and institutional setups and best practices possibly eligible for replication in Moldova. Leading Diaspora representatives from a number of destination countries shall act as discussants and throughout take position from the Diaspora perspective as to the applicability of models and voice needs' and proposals of the Diaspora constituency.
3. In **Session Three**, based on the evidence and experiences discussed, a targeted plenary round-table discussion shall be conducted around the definition of concrete competences of the future Diaspora Agency, touching upon breadth of functions, size and needed technical capacities, operational vs. policy-making tasks, inter-ministerial coordination and division of labour, communication channels with diaspora and consultative mechanisms to ensure feedback on policies and programming.
4. At the event's conclusion discussions shall be briefly systematized and put forward to the Government of the Republic of Moldova for further follow-up.