

NATIONAL INFORMATION RESILIENCE INDEX FOR MOLDOVA: THE COMPARATIVE REPORT 2024 – 2026

CENTER FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

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CENTER FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
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NATIONAL INFORMATION RESILIENCE INDEX: THE CONCEPT

National Information Resilience Index report offers an in-depth analysis of changes within Moldovan society between 2024 and 2026, reflecting how vulnerable as well as resilient the Moldovan public is to the negative impacts of foreign information manipulation (FIMI). It provides data-driven insights to support the Center for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation (CSCCD) in its mission to enhance the resilience of Moldovan society against FIMI and related threats.

The CSCCD's mission is to strengthen and coordinate inter-institutional efforts to counter disinformation, information manipulation, and orchestrated campaigns that disseminate harmful messages, narratives, or communications, regardless of their source, i.e. safeguarding national interests as outlined in Article 6 of the Law on the Center for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation[1]. The CSCCD operates in support of the national interests of the Republic of Moldova, which includes the preservation of peace, the consolidation of democratic governance and social cohesion, and the advancement of the country's European integration agenda. To this end, the institution develops, coordinates and implements measures aimed at strengthening societal resilience to threats targeting the information environment.

The Concept for strategic communication and countering disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference[2], as approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, relies on the National Security Strategy[3]. Its overarching goal is to support, strengthen, and help realize the national interests that shape the vision of a 21st-century Moldova: a democratic, European republic firmly integrated into the political, economic, social, and security frameworks of advanced democracies and developed economies, with a clear national identity and growing international standing.

To achieve this goal, the entire vision is focused on the central pillars of strategic communication:

- European integration
- Social cohesion
- Economic resilience
- Strengthening the defense sector
- Strengthening national security in the regional context

The National Information Resilience (NIR) Index is a tool and methodology developed by the CSCCD with expert input from the International Practitioners Partnership Network PractNet, to strategically guide its activities and assess how Moldovan society is evolving across five key priority areas that reflect the country's core strategic objectives. In doing so, it measures progress in strengthening societal resilience against disinformation. This allows the Center to identify and analyze long-term shifts in public beliefs and attitudes, taking into account the lasting effects of both disinformation circulating in the information space and Moldova's own national narratives. In this way, it captures not just momentary reactions but deeper, structural changes in how society understands and responds to these influences.

Beyond measurement, the Index provides a strategic framework to guide the actions of the Center and its partners in advancing Moldovan national interests, strengthening societal resilience, and carrying out the Center's responsibilities as defined by law and the broader Concept for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation, Information Manipulation, and Foreign Interference.

[1] Republic of Moldova Parliament LAW No. 242 of 31-07-2023 on the Center for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation and on the amendment of certain normative acts

[2] Concept for strategic communication and countering disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference, 2024-2030

[3] National Security Strategy of the Republic of Moldova

THE METHODOLOGY

Two intensive years of pivotal elections have sharpened the public discourse around emotionally charged topics, fueling a surge of disinformation aimed at shaping opinion on these issues. At the same time, rapid geopolitical shifts continue to reshape both Moldova's security situation and its internal processes. This volatile regional context demands an integrated approach to strategic communication and countering hybrid aggression — including election interference and sustained disinformation campaigns — given their direct impact on Moldova's information environment and societal dynamics. Building resilience against these pressures is therefore critical to fostering a more stable and prosperous society.

To guide this work, the Center has developed an analytical tool that regularly measures long-term shifts in public attitudes and beliefs across five key pillars tied to Moldova's national interests, allowing it to track progress and assess the impact of its own efforts alongside those of its partners.

The designed indicators take into consideration and are based on:

- A comprehensive analysis of existing research conducted in both Moldova and other European countries, covering the most relevant topics and analytical models aligned with Moldova's national security priority areas.
- Extensive consultations held with Moldovan and international experts on economic policy, EU cooperation, societal cohesion, defense, security, and foreign information manipulation. They provided assessments of the current situation and insights into each priority area.
- Final selection of core indicators for each of the priority areas, to fit them into one comprehensive survey, allowing for extensive cross-analysis of interdependencies between the priority areas.

The Index also functions as a structured public opinion monitoring tool for annual data collection, consolidating all priority areas into a single process — essential both for tracking how key indicators change over time and for cross-analyzing how different indicators interact. This approach offers deeper insight into the synergies between strategic priorities and the possible drivers of change, informing both risk analysis and the design of effective interventions against FIMI.

The current report is based on three NIR Index surveys from 2024, 2025 and 2026, designed by CSCCD with expert input from the International Practitioners Partnership Network PractNet. The data was collected by the public opinion survey company CIVIS via face-to-face interviews, with a representative sample of at least 1200 respondents every year. The sample is always representative of the Moldovan population weighted by key demographics. The analysis relies primarily on the NIR Index, looking both at demographic patterns within the year in focus and on trends emerging from data collected over time, with particular attention to the relationships between different indicators. Where available, results are further compared with Moldovan and international data — such as statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics, election results analyses, and findings from the CSCCD's monitoring of Moldova's information space — to provide context and allow for better understanding of the trends.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

The accession negotiations between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union officially began in June 2024, and in May 2025 the Government approved the National Programme for the Accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union (NPA) 2025-2029. By 2026, the Republic of Moldova has successfully completed the bilateral screening process covering all 33 negotiating chapters and adopted roadmaps on the rule of law, public administration reform and the functioning of democratic institutions, all of which received a positive assessment from the European Commission[4]. By July 2026, the EU and the Republic of Moldova formally opened negotiations on two negotiating clusters – on fundamentals and on external relations policies, a core thematic grouping within the EU's accession negotiation framework setting the parameters for how candidate countries align their international, trade and defense policies with the EU.

This report tracks how Moldovan public opinion shifted between spring 2024 and 2026 — a period marked by two national elections and the autumn 2024 EU membership referendum. Earlier findings warned of information manipulation risks given how susceptible public views on EU accession were to media influence. This analysis picks up in 2026, examining the referendum's aftermath and how EU accession has since been communicated to the public.

EU integration gives Moldova a framework for strengthening democratic governance, positioning the country to eventually benefit from membership while building the capacity to contribute in return. Accession requires industrial, economic, political, legal, social, and cultural transformation to meet EU criteria. European Commission documents show the EU has prioritized judicial reform, anti-corruption measures, and curbing oligarchic influence on governance.

The Moldovan Concept on Strategic Communication[5] underscores that European integration offers the strategic clarity needed for coherent, consistent, and effective communication of a unified state identity, geopolitical and security choices, as well as key long-term development goals within a democratic political system. The Concept also emphasizes the prospect of an improved economic situation for Moldovan citizens, based on the goal of significantly strengthening the political, economic, and social framework.

[4] Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union, 16 June 2022

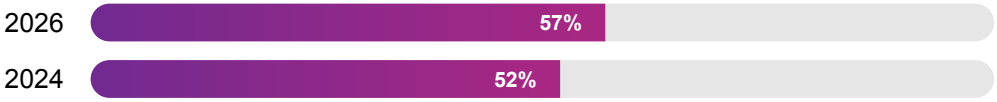
[5] Concept for strategic communication and countering disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference, 2024-2030





EUROPEAN INTEGRATION – KEY HIGHLIGHTS





Support for accession to the European Union

EU ACCESSION SUPPORT HAS GROWN, WHILE POSITIONS REMAIN POLARIZED. The share of respondents expressing support for accession to the European Union has increased to 57% in 2026, compared with a narrow majority of 52% two years prior, in 2024.

50% Exactly half of the Moldovan population expresses optimism about the future of Moldova due to its status as an EU candidate country.

MOST MOLDOVANS BACK PRE-ACCESSION REFORMS TO UNLOCK EU BENEFITS.

62% of Moldovan population agreed that the possible inconvenience of the pre-accession reforms is worth the long-term benefits.

57% believe that Moldova will be able to protect its interests within the EU.

RISING EU EXPECTATIONS MEET LINGERING POLARIZATION. Asked about the expected impact of EU membership on various social groups, as well as institutional systems and the traditions in Moldova, the majority of Moldovans expect a positive effect, while about a quarter of the population still fears negative impacts.



EU ACCESSION SUPPORT HAS GROWN, WHILE POSITIONS REMAIN POLARIZED

A spring 2026 public opinion survey found that 57% of Moldovans said they would vote in favor of EU accession (up from 52% in 2024 and 53% in 2025), while 33% said they'd prefer to stay outside the EU (unchanged from 2025, up from 28% in 2024), and 3% said they would not vote in such a referendum.

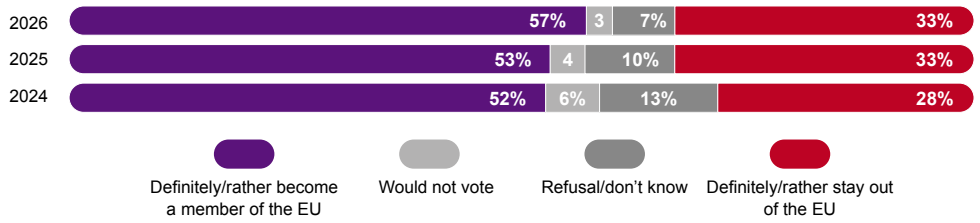
- Support for EU accession is highest (70%) in the youngest age group (18-24) and lowest (49%) among those aged 45-54, while in other age groups it ranges between 54% and 60%.
- People living in rural areas tend to be more supportive of EU accession (66%), while people in cities tend to support it somewhat less (47%). Regionally, the Center region is most supportive at 73%, while in UTAG&Taraclia it is as low as 8%; the strongest change in opinion happened in the Northern region where it grew from 37% in 2025 to 53% in 2026.
- The level of current income seems to matter here -- people who earn more tend to be somewhat more supportive, while those with lower income tend to be less supportive.

The share of people who feel proud of Moldova's candidate country status rose to 50% in 2026, after holding steady at 47% over the previous two years. At the same time, opinions on the candidate status show signs of polarising: the share doubting it was the right decision edged up from 12% to 16%, while the share expecting nothing to change fell from 31% to 28%.

- Same demographic trends appear as with the EU accession support: the attitudes are most positive among the youngest generation and those living in the Center region; attitude of people living in rural areas tend to be more positive
- A more positive attitude tends to coincide with higher trust of Moldovan media in Romanian language, while those who trust Russian Federation media (including TV, radio, online news) tend to be less positive.
- People with more positive attitudes also tend to have higher expectations for the impact of EU accession on various demographic groups in Moldova, consider economic changes in Moldova to be on the right track, and support economic alignment of Moldova with the EU.

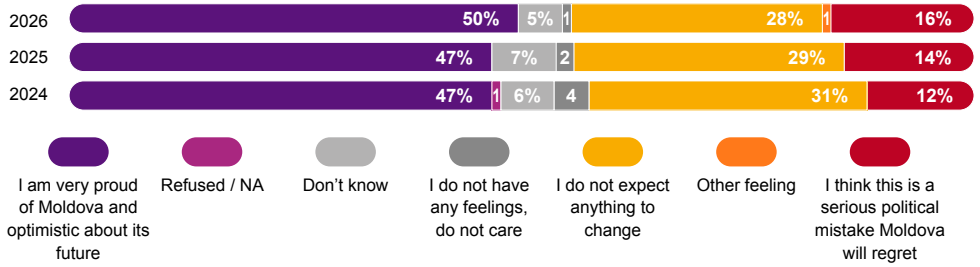
IF TOMORROW THERE WAS A REFERENDUM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA ABOUT ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Would you vote for Moldova to...



**Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

WHAT FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT MOLDOVA RECEIVING THE STATUS OF THE CANDIDATE COUNTRY FOR EU ACCESSION?



**Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

MOST MOLDOVANS BACK PRE-ACCESSION REFORMS TO UNLOCK EU BENEFITS

In 2026, the perceptions of various EU-related topics became more positive, with 55% - 68% of respondents holding a positive outlook, while the share of people with negative views declined slightly, to about a quarter of the population.

The highest level of agreement (68%) is with the statement that EU member states benefit from the European single market, which provides free movement of goods, services, capital and people – up from 62% in 2024. 62% now share the opinion that even though the EU pre-accession reforms might cause inconvenience at the start, they are worth the long-term benefits.

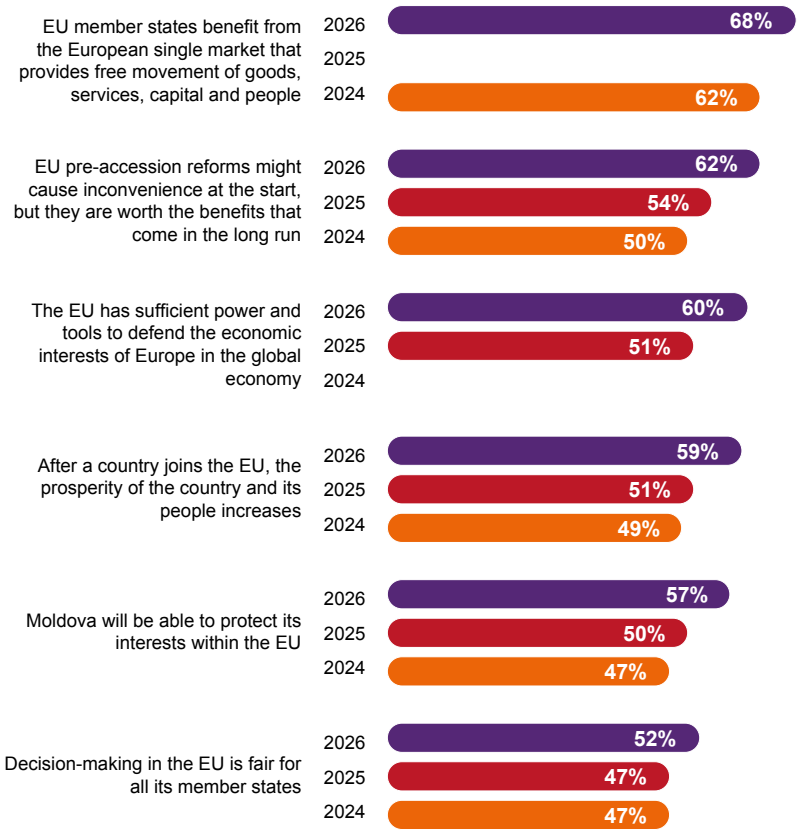
- Agreement is strongest in the youngest age group (18-24) and among people living in the Center region and in villages rather than cities.
- Agreement with this position has increased significantly over the past few years, equally among men and women, with a notable shift in the 35-44 and 55+ age groups where it was previously below average.

The belief that Moldova will be able to protect its interests within the EU increased by 7% in the past year, reaching 57%.

- Agreement is strongest (74%) in the youngest age group (18-24) and in rural areas - the trend mirrors other topics.
- Significant changes include increased support for this position among women and in the 55+ age group, while in the 45-54 age group it remained below average, at 46%. Pensioners, who in 2025 were significantly less likely to agree with this position, improved their opinion in 2026, reaching the population average.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION?

(completely / rather agree)



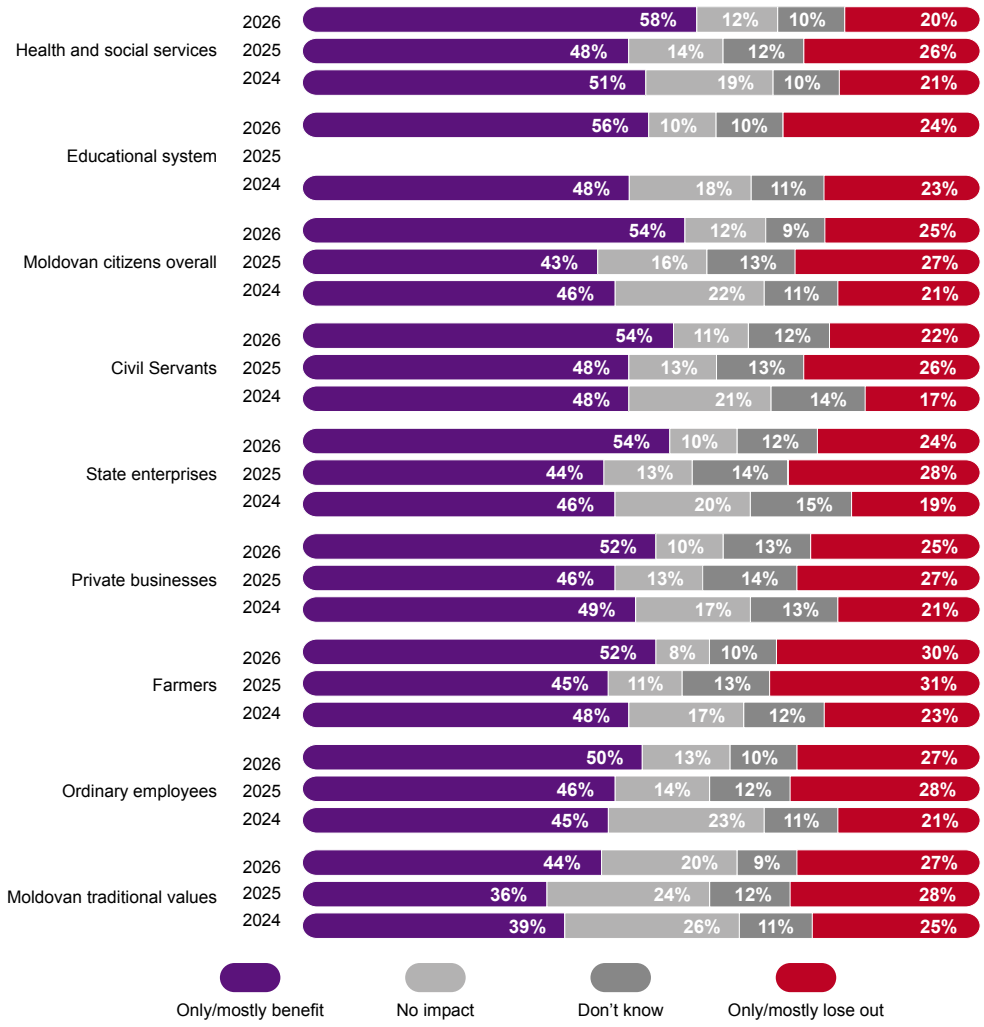
RISING EU EXPECTATIONS MEET LINGERING POLARIZATION

Asked about how EU membership would affect farmers, civil servants, private employees or Moldovan citizens overall, as well as private businesses, state enterprises, education and healthcare system, and Moldovan traditional values – most Moldovans expect benefits, with positive views up 5-10% compared to 2025 and negative views down by up to 5 points. The expected impact on Moldovan citizens overall shifted the most: 54% now expect benefits (+11 points), while "no impact" fell to 9%. Healthcare and social services rank most positive: 58% expect the EU membership to benefit the sector, up 10 points from last year.

- Both positive and negative expectations remain consistent across genders, except for the impact on ordinary employees, where men are somewhat more positive.
- Younger, rural, and Center-region respondents tend to be more optimistic, while those in cities — especially Chisinau and UTAG&Taraclia — are less so. Lower-income households are also more skeptical.
- Between 2025 and 2026, positive expectations rose most among men — especially in the Center and the North — and among the 55+ group, while expectations for the impact on citizens overall also saw a notable rise among 18-24-year-olds.

The 2025 rise in anxiety over negative impacts — likely a temporary effect of the disinformation wave that fueled anti-EU sentiment around the referendum — now appears to be reversing. Traditional values, a frequent disinformation target, were among the most polarized topics in 2025 (36% positive vs. 28% negative). By 2026, this eased: 44% now expect a positive impact (+8 points) and 20% expect none — a sign of societal resilience once the emotionally charged disinformation subsides.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, AFTER THE ACCESSION TO THE EU, THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES IN MOLDOVA WILL BENEFIT OR SUFFER?



Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

SOCIAL COHESION: TRUST, BELONGING AND AGENCY

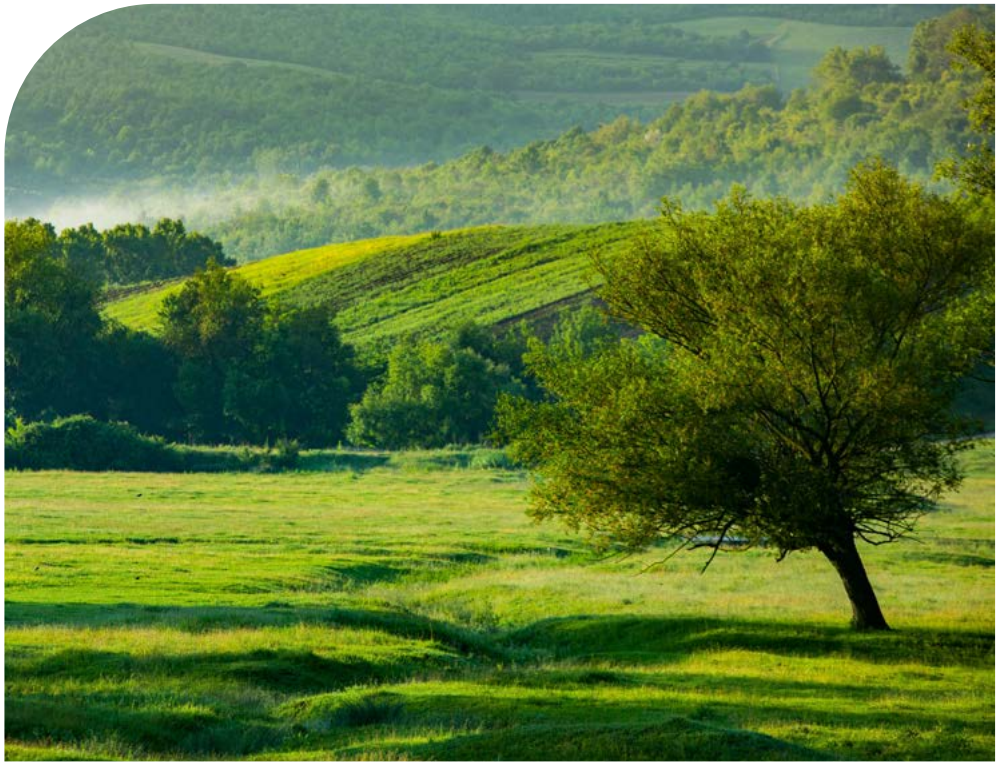
Socially cohesive societies are defined by a strong sense of inclusion, belonging, recognition, participation, and legitimacy, reflecting both state-citizen relationships and interactions among societal groups, underpinned by a shared set of attitudes and norms. Social cohesion is one of the core preconditions for societal resilience and its ability to withstand various challenges – particularly in contexts marked by ethnic and linguistic plurality, as is the case in the Republic of Moldova, as well as geopolitical turbulence related to close proximity to an active war zone and the security risks that come with it.

The National Information Resilience Index covers several topics central to societal cohesion. These range from society-level phenomena to grassroots-level factors. At the society level, the Index looks at support for democratic governance — the kind that ensures equitable inclusion and protects rights, which in turn fosters cohesion. High cohesion, meanwhile, builds the trust and shared values that democratic institutions need to function. At the grassroots level, the Index examines individuals' sense of agency — their perceived ability to influence what happens in their society.

These attitudes go beyond theory — they show up in how people actually interact with one another and with institutions on a daily basis, forming a society that can withstand challenges, embrace ethnic and cultural differences, and rally around a shared purpose. Central to this is a clear recognition that everyone's personal involvement matters, and that individual choices help shape the changes and future vision Moldova is working toward.



SOCIAL COHESION IN MOLDOVA – KEY HIGHLIGHTS



FAIR ELECTIONS, ACCOUNTABLE LEADERS: THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES MOLDOVANS VALUE MOST. The democratic backsliding of 2025 has slowed, with 62% of the population considering it important for Moldova's governing system to be democratic. The principles of democratic governance receive a high rating of importance, the highest reaching 96% while the lowest still at a high 69% level.

62% of the population considering it important for Moldova's governing system to be democratic.

TRUST ON THE RISE: EVERYDAY PUBLIC SERVICES LEAD THE WAY. In 2026 there is notable growth in trust across all researched sectors – the exception being religious institutions, which remain the most trusted. Among the government institutions, the highest trust rating goes to the education and healthcare systems, along with the local authorities.

NATIONAL PRIDE AND SECURITY REMAIN STRONG AS APPRECIATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES GROWS. An overwhelming majority feel proud about being Moldovan citizens, consistent with previous years. There is a steady increase in the number of people who appreciate the public services provided by the Moldovan state, including education, healthcare, and security, mirroring the growing trust in state institutions.

RISING VOICES, RESTORED TRUST: MOLDOVANS' GROWING FAITH IN THEIR POWER TO SHAPE SOCIETY. Agency, or the perceived ability to impact society, increased significantly compared to 2024. When asked how people choose to contribute to society, the most popular responses are volunteering in the community and donating to the church.

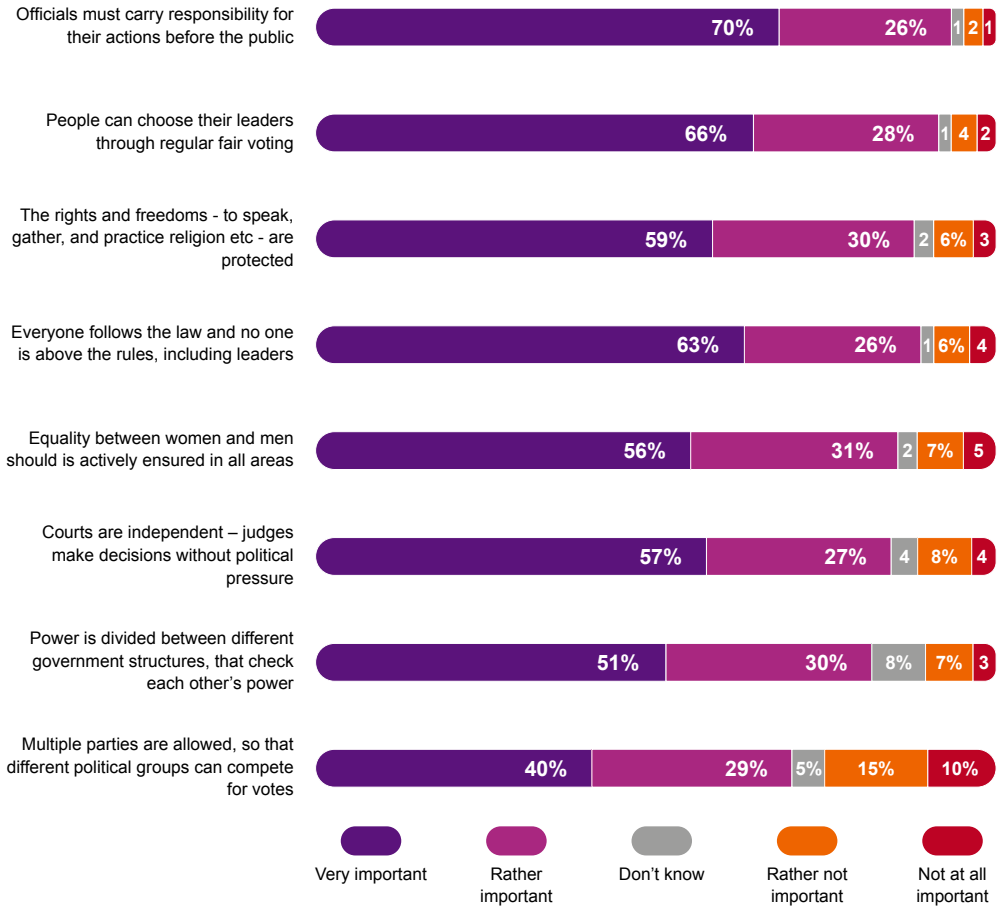


FAIR ELECTIONS, ACCOUNTABLE LEADERS: THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES MOLDOVANS VALUE MOST

The democratic backsliding of 2025 has slowed and, in some regions of Moldova, visibly reversed, while continuing among some other groups. 62% of the overall Moldovan population currently considers it important for the governance system in Moldova to be democratic – practically the same as 61% a year before.

- The strongest shift took place among 18–24-year-olds, whose support increased from 60% in 2025 to 74%, making this age group now the staunchest supporter of democratic governance. This is encouraging, since this age group has the highest stake in Moldova's future and is likely to back democratic progress — but it also demands attention, as younger people are more prone to consider emigration if they see democracy backsliding.
- A significant increase in appreciation of democratic governance also occurred in the Northern region, where the share of those valuing democracy reached 60% (+14 points, to reach the country-wide average of 62%). Chisinau, by contrast, moved in the opposite direction. The capital, where democracy had been valued most highly of all regions a year earlier, saw appreciation of democratic governance fall by 17 points to 56%, dropping below the country average.
- Among the various principles of democratic governance evaluated within the scope of this Index, the need for officials to be accountable for their actions came out on top, cited by 96% of respondents, This was closely followed by the opportunity to choose leaders through regular fair voting, which was considered important by 94%, while protecting freedom of assembly and rights to free expression and religious practice was appreciated by 89%.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT OR NOT IMPORTANT IS THAT THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN MOLDOVA ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES



*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

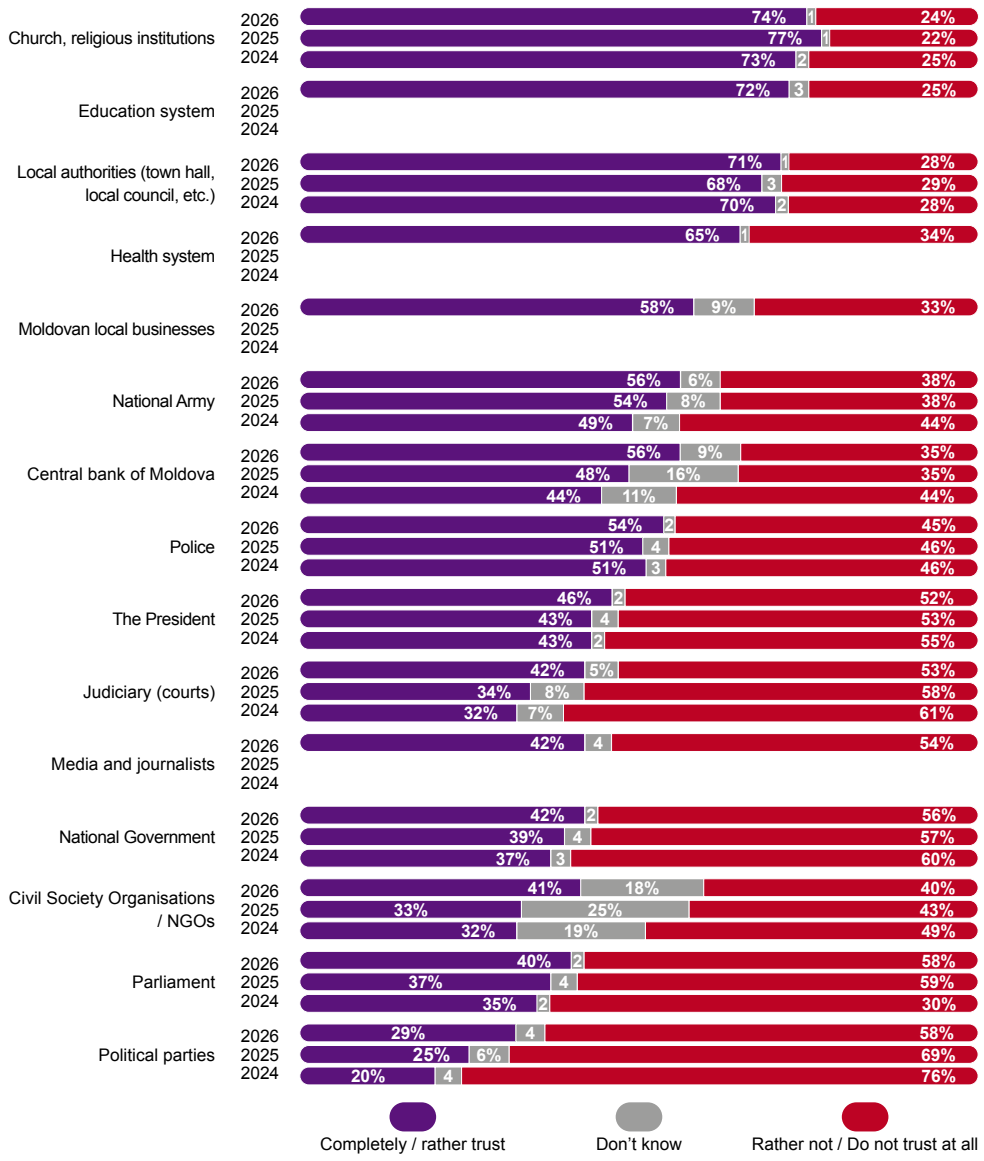
TRUST ON THE RISE: EVERYDAY PUBLIC SERVICES LEAD THE WAY

Trust is at the core of social cohesion: it shapes the level of confidence between people and social groups, underpins the democratic mandate of political and public institutions, and is closely tied to the reliability of information and media. As this foundational element, trust is also a prime target of disinformation and hybrid warfare manipulation tactics.

In 2026, there was notable growth in public trust across nearly all researched sectors, with the religious institutions the exception, where it actually declined slightly, though the church remains the most trusted institution overall. Among government-related institutions, the highest trust rating goes to the education system, trusted by 72% of respondents, followed closely by the local authorities at 71%. The healthcare system, which also joined the rating in 2026 for the first time, is trusted by 65%.

The 2026 Index also shows a slow but stable and continuous rise in trust in political institutions, especially trust in the President, which increased from 42% to 47% over two years. Trust in the National Government and the Parliament also increased slightly, reaching 42% and 40% respectively. This trend is also supported by an uptick in trust in civil society organizations, which grew from 32% to 41% over two years, and in political parties, which reached 29% 2026. This change may be due to their high visibility during the two consecutive years with national-level elections that significantly impacted the future of the country.

Analysis of the overall trust ratings confirms previously noted broader trend: institutions and services with closer proximity to people, and with which people have first-hand daily experience, receive higher trust — suggesting the importance of a personalized approach, and of delivering services or messages that respond to specific, practical needs.



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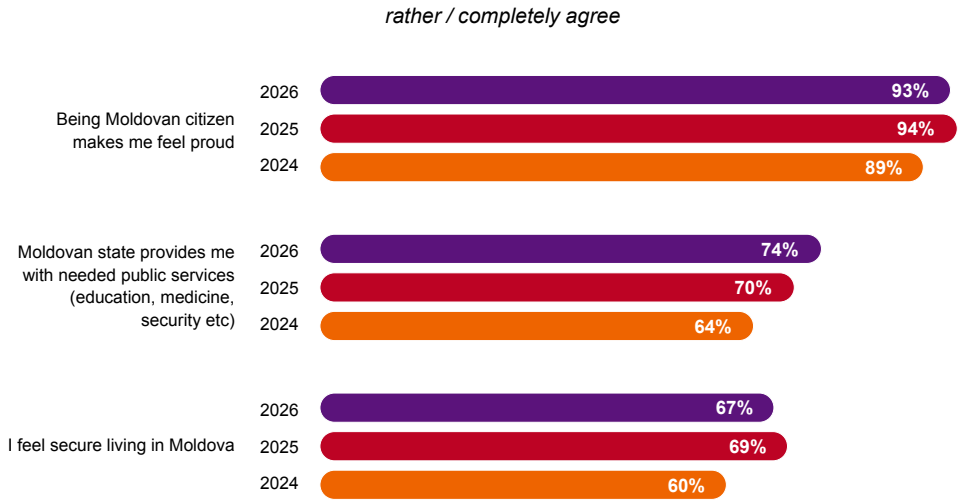
NATIONAL PRIDE AND SECURITY REMAIN STRONG AS APPRECIATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES GROWS

National identity – rooted in culture, language, history, as well as a broad agreement on the core principles the society is built on – underpins political success. It strengthens security, governance, economic growth and trust, and in turn makes liberal democracy stronger.

An overwhelming majority – 93% of the respondents in the current study – feel proud to be Moldovan citizens, maintaining the same extremely high level as the year before. National pride – an evaluative and emotional component reflecting how citizens judge their nation's achievements, culture, and status – is an important foundation for strong national identity. This result is stable across age and gender, with slight regional variations: people in the Center region and in rural areas feel pride slightly more frequently.

There is a steady increase – from 64% in 2024 to 74% in 2026 – in the share of people who appreciate the public services provided by the Moldovan state, with the positive change visible across gender and all age groups. The growing awareness that the Moldovan state provides needed public services, such as education, healthcare, and security, may mirror the increasing trust in state institutions discussed above.

- In 2026, the result was highest in the youngest age group, 18-24, at 88%, and lowest in the 45-54 age group, at 63%.
- The biggest shift since 2024 was in the North, up from 53% to 78% – now second only to the Center's 79%. UTAG&Taraclia lag at 51%, likely due to its autonomous region's different public-service setup.



RISING VOICES, RESTORED TRUST: MOLDOVANS' GROWING FAITH IN THEIR POWER TO SHAPE SOCIETY

Human agency, or people's ability to act, choose, and shape their political and social world, is essential to democracy: it makes collective self-governance possible, guards against tyranny, and drives social progress. Without citizens actively enacting their will, democratic systems lose both their legitimacy and their purpose.

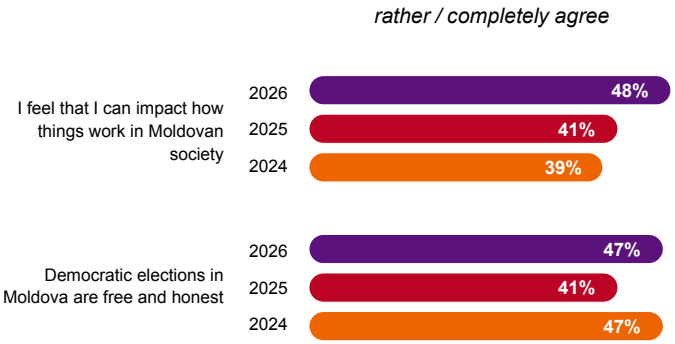
- According to the NIR Index, the perceived ability to impact society increased significantly, from 39% in 2024 to 48% in 2026, while the share of those who disagreed that they could have an impact fell from 56% to 49% — a positive trend toward greater empowerment of the population.
- The strongest improvement – 10 points – took place among the 45–54 age group, a remarkable increase from 44% in 2025 to 54% in 2026. A statistically significant increase also occurred among the 55+ age group.

Index results show that higher perceived agency coincides with higher trust in democratic elections, higher trust in political institutions, and trust in Moldovan media, while trust in Russian Federation media is linked to lower agency. Agency also correlates with both economic resilience and security: people with higher agency tend to have higher life satisfaction and a more entrepreneurial mindset, as well as higher confidence in Moldova's ability to protect itself and higher readiness to defend Moldova, should the need arise.

Volunteering builds confidence, connection, and civic participation, thus also strengthening the power to create social change. Asked about specific charitable or volunteer activities people engage in, donations to the church and community volunteering are equally popular.

- The 35–44 age group leads in community volunteering (27%) and monetary donations (25%); those 55+ engage online the least (2%) but give most to the church (27%).
- Women favor the church (28%) and monetary donations (16%) more than men (20%, 10%); men donate blood more frequently (12% vs. 7%).
- Participation rises with education and income; rural and higher-educated people volunteer more for community work (e.g., planting trees, repairs).

The 2025 dip in trust toward democratic elections proved temporary, likely driven by the intense period characterized by two elections and heavy disinformation aimed at undermining their integrity. Trust rebounded in 2026 to 47%, most notably in the Center (42% to 58%) and the North (44% to 51%).



ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Moldova's economic resilience is closely tied to EU integration: candidate status provides a clear reform anchor, opens export markets, and has unlocked major support like the European Commission's €1.8 billion Growth Plan adopted in 2024[6]. Digital and business reforms, including deregulation, simplified business registration, and rapid growth in IT service exports are also easing administrative burdens and driving resilience. On the other hand, an aging population and labor shortages remain a challenge, constraining long-term domestic productivity and workforce participation.

At the personal level, a nation's economic resilience rests on citizens', households', and businesses' ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from economic shocks. These adaptive capacities form the backbone of national stability and growth. Public awareness of economic policies — and how institutions implement them — depends on clear, transparent communication. Trust in institutions, in turn, requires confidence in the fair use of public funds and clear messaging about their impact on communities. Effective communication is thus central to building this awareness and trust, a principle at the core of CSCCD's work.

Economic resilience is a core element of the foundational concept[7] of the Centre for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation. It guides the Centre's work and efforts to build the overall resilience of Moldovan society based on the national security strategy[8], and serves as the basis for sustained national prosperity and stability. Moldova's concept of strategic communication emphasizes diversification, innovation, and sustainable growth as key development catalysts. The Concept highlights the importance of accurate communication regarding the economic policies and initiatives of the government and strategic partners, viewing it as crucial for building a climate for a dynamic and robust business environment.

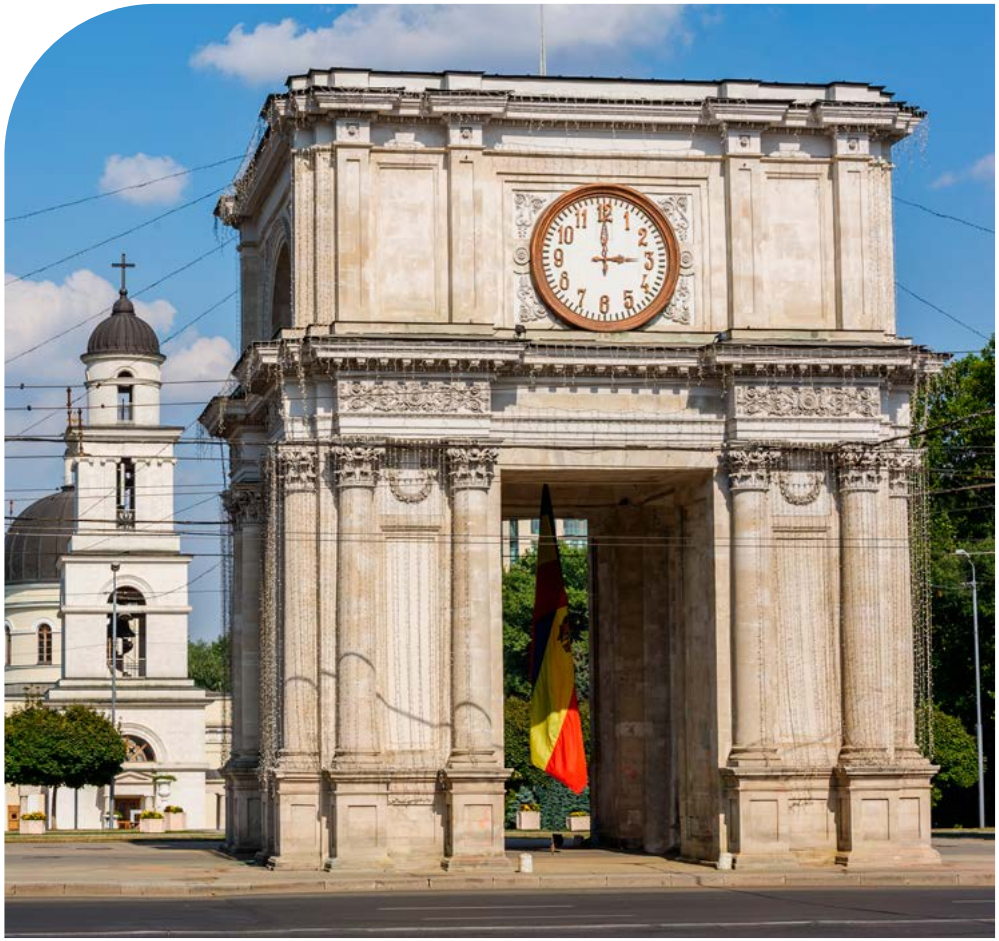
[6] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/it/ip_24_5124

[7] Concept for strategic communication and countering disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference, 2024-2030

[8] https://presedinte.md/app/webroot/uploaded/Proiect%20SSN_2023_En.pdf



ECONOMIC RESILIENCE – KEY HIGHLIGHTS



ECONOMIC NARRATIVES HOLD STRONG, CONFIDENCE IN MOLDOVA'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS IS MORE DIVIDED. Overall views on economic policy remain steady at high levels of 2025. Most economic policy narratives enjoy strong support, with agreement about the importance of strategic fuel and gas reserves leading the way - though confidence that "economic changes and developments in Moldova are on the right track" remains notably lower.

RESILIENCE ON THE RISE: A SHIFT TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE. Economic resilience indicators show marked improvement since 2024, alongside a stronger entrepreneurial mindset and growing readiness to support oneself and one's family through hard times. More people now save for the future and feel prepared to provide for their family in a crisis. Still, the interest in seeking work abroad if stable income is lost also ticked up slightly.

VIEWS ON DIASPORA: BETWEEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CULTURAL BONDS. Expectations for the diaspora center mainly on financial support and the preservation of Moldovan culture, with financial contributions seen as most important and cultural ties close behind. Many also value the diaspora for bringing European culture back to Moldova, though a notable share see this as less important.

MIXED SIGNALS: GROWING REJECTION OF CORRUPTION IN PRINCIPLE, WHILE TOLERANCE FOR EVERYDAY BRIBERY LINGERS. Most Moldovans see informal payments as holding the country back, though a share still consider small-scale "daily corruption" normal. Perceptions of overall corruption levels remain largely unchanged from last year — fewer people are undecided and more now have a clear stance on whether corruption is growing or declining. Meanwhile, trust that the state uses taxes fairly and transparently has clearly improved.

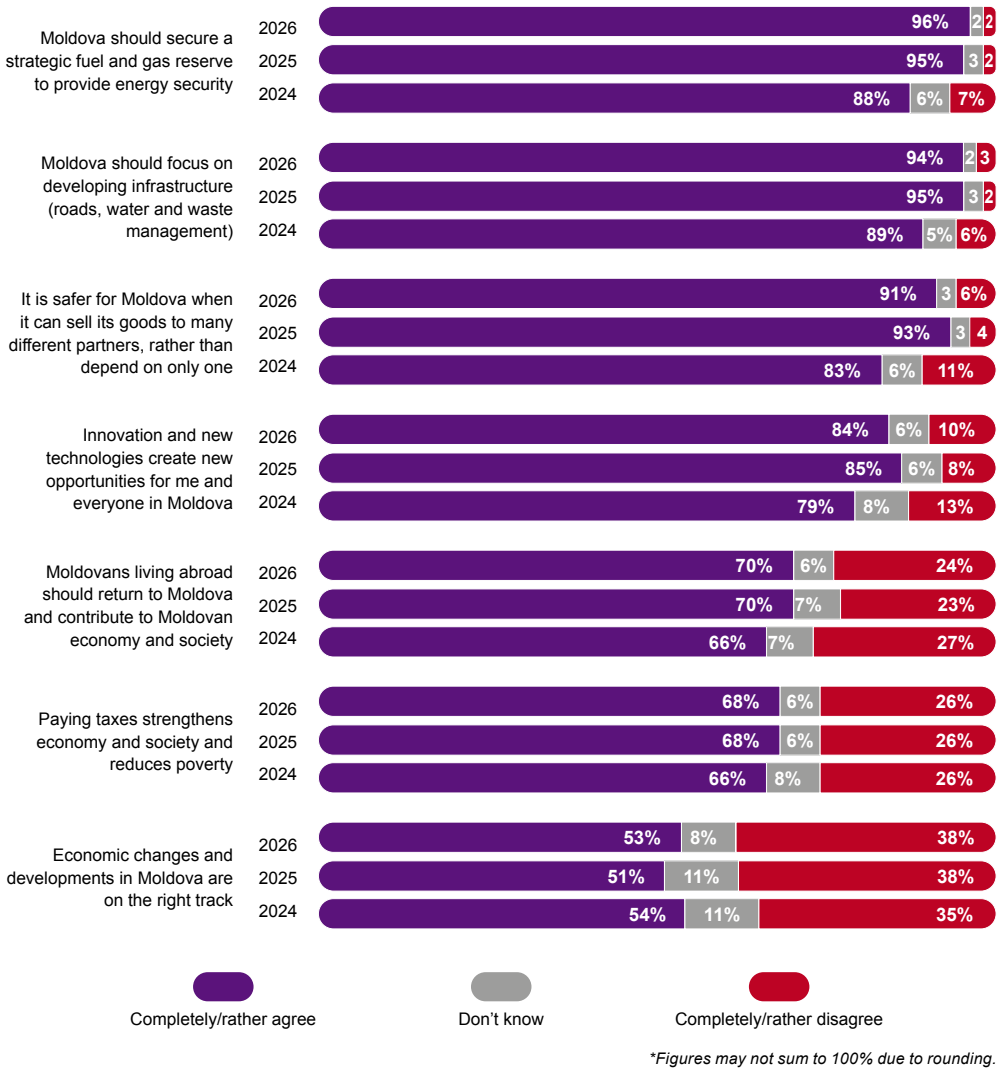


ECONOMIC NARRATIVES HOLD STRONG, CONFIDENCE IN MOLDOVA'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS IS MORE DIVIDED

Preparing for EU accession is reshaping Moldova's economy through financial aid, trade integration, and infrastructure modernization — while the information space becomes a battleground over narratives on Moldova's progress. As in 2025, the public strongly backs specific economic policies like trade diversification, infrastructure development, and innovation, with strategic fuel and gas reserves garnering the highest support at 96%. But broader, more emotionally charged views on whether Moldova's economic development is "on the right track" remain far more divided.

- Agreement is linked with stronger EU support, institutional trust, defense readiness, economic stability, and greater awareness of how dependent Moldova's economy is on the wellbeing of its neighbors' economies. Disagreement is linked with respondents' weaker economic situation, more favorable views of Russia and the EAEU, and lower support for Ukraine.
- Views are balanced across gender and age, with younger respondents slightly more positive. Rural and Center-region residents lean positive, Chisinau is evenly split (46/46), while UTAG&Taraclia is most negative.

According to the CSCCD's Public Awareness of Information Manipulation report[9], malign sources frequently exploit themes like cost of living, energy, agriculture, labor shortages, and public services — linking everyday hardships to state failure and the European path. This may widen the gap between support for economic policies and confidence in their implementation.



*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

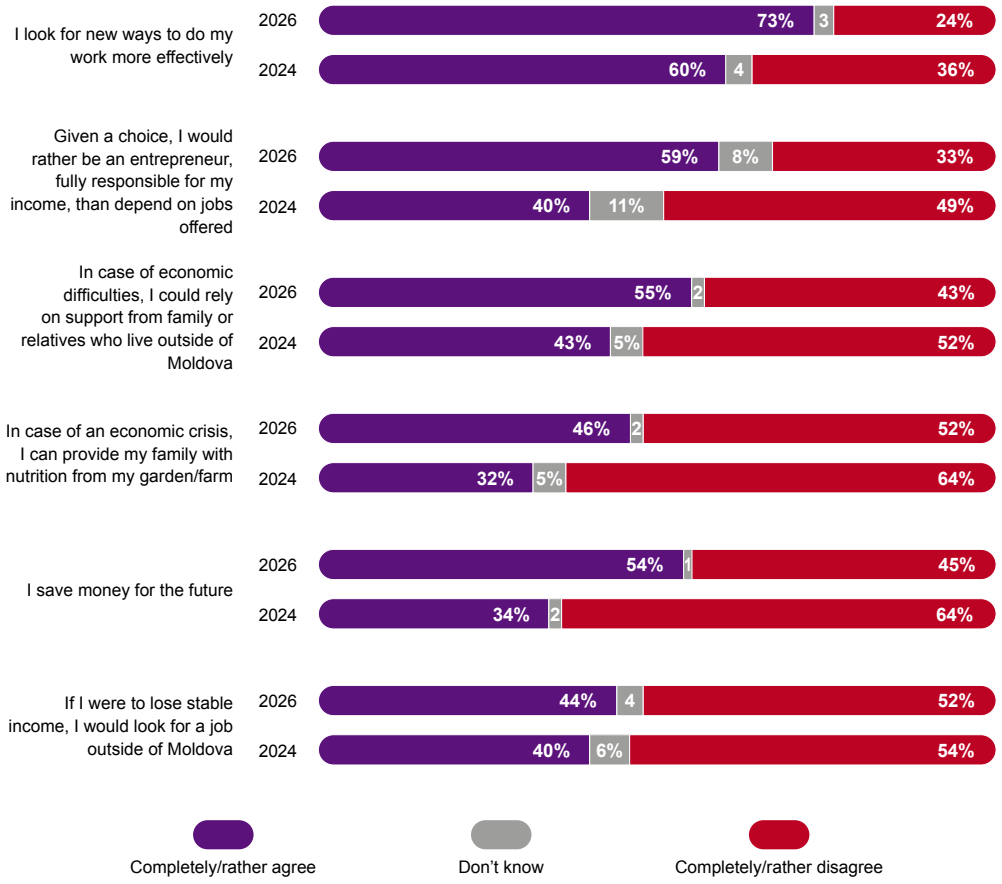
[9] https://stratcom.md/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Public-Awareness-Report-on-Information-Manipulation.pdf

RESILIENCE ON THE RISE: A SHIFT TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE

Looking at economic resilience at the level of families and individuals, the 2026 results show strong advances in entrepreneurial mindset, as well as potential readiness to support oneself and one's family in the event of economic difficulties.

- 73% now seek more effective ways to work, up sharply from two years ago — a broad shift across all demographics except pensioners, who remain near 2024 levels. Openness to entrepreneurship rose, up 19 points to 59% , a trend seen across all demographic groups, though it is higher among men, younger respondents, and people with higher incomes.
- Self-reliance for crisis nutrition rose from 32% to 46% across all groups, though rural residents (61%) are far more self-reliant than urban residents (27%), largely due to garden/farm access; Chisinau and UTAG&Taraclia are most vulnerable.
- The share of those saving for the future rose 20 points to 54%, a broad trend. Reliance on diaspora financial support remains high at 55%, growing especially among the 55+ and lower-income groups.
- Interest in seeking work abroad after income loss has ticked up slightly since 2024 — mainly among lower-income, less-educated men, and in the North, in the South, and in UTAG&Taraclia, while the Center and Chisinau trend the opposite way.

These indicators are closely linked: a stronger entrepreneurial mindset tends to coincide with greater work optimization and crisis self-reliance, along with stronger belief in Moldova's defensibility, positive views of the EU's role in Moldovan security, and negative views of the EAEU.



*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

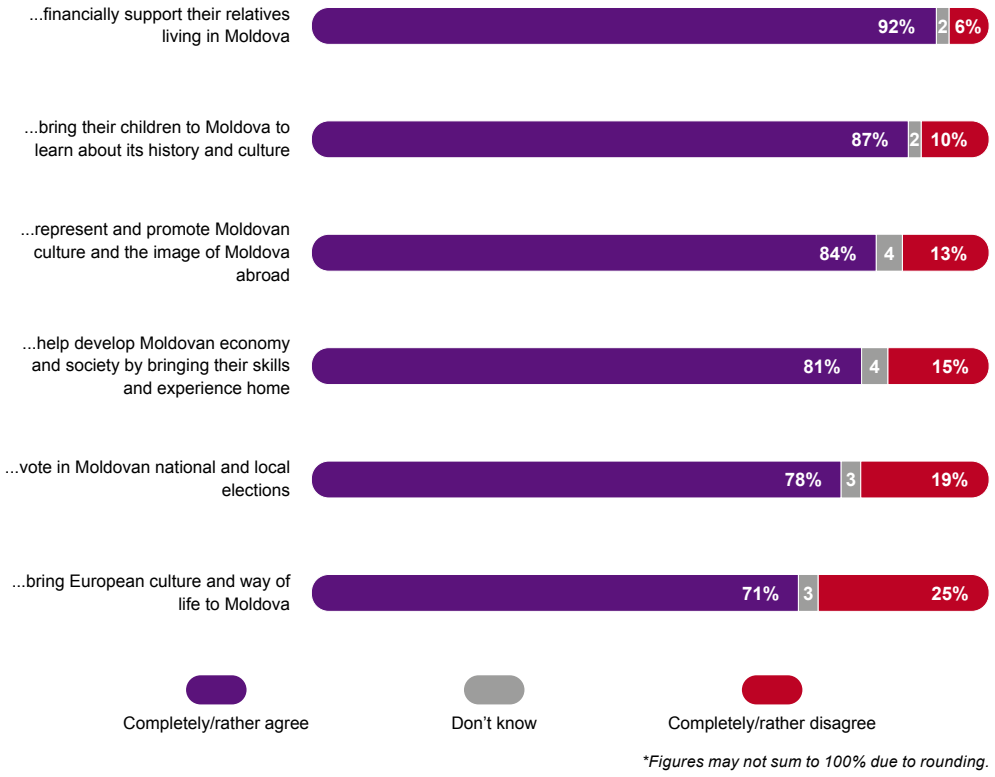
VIEWS ON DIASPORA: BETWEEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CULTURAL BONDS

According to the National Program “Diaspora” for 2024–2028 of the Republic of Moldova and based on the estimation by the Migration EU eXpertise Initiative (MIEUX+), more than one million Moldovan citizens currently live abroad, accounting for around 38% of emigrants in its total population, with 47% residing in the European Union.

Moldovans value the diaspora most for practical, family-related support: financial support to relatives (92%), passing on Moldovan culture to their children (87%), promoting Moldova abroad (84%), and helping develop Moldovan economy and society by bringing home skills (81%). Support is slightly less unanimous for more political or symbolic roles — voting in Moldovan national and local elections (78%) and bringing European culture home (71%, the lowest, though still a clear majority). Overall, the diaspora is valued more as a source of support and know-how than as a vehicle for political or cultural influence.

The clearest divides are by identity and geography rather than gender: Romanian-speaking, ethnic-majority, and Center-region respondents are most positive, while Russian/other-language speakers, ethnic minorities, and especially UTAG&T-araclia are more skeptical — support for bringing European culture drops to just 38% there.

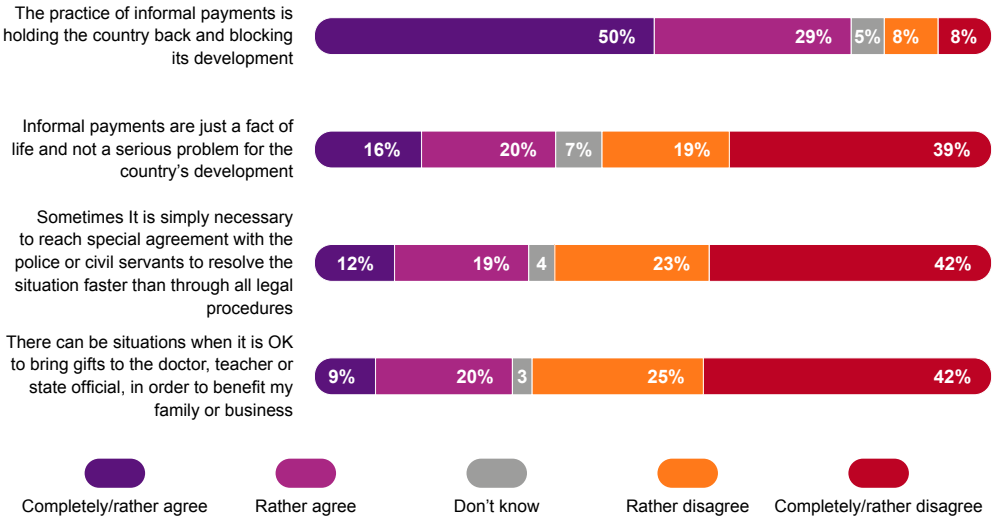
IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING WAYS HOW MOLDOVAN DIASPORA CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN MOLDOVA AND ITS FUTURE?



*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

MIXED SIGNALS: HIGH REJECTION OF CORRUPTION, WHILE TOLERANCE FOR EVERYDAY BRIBERY LINGERS

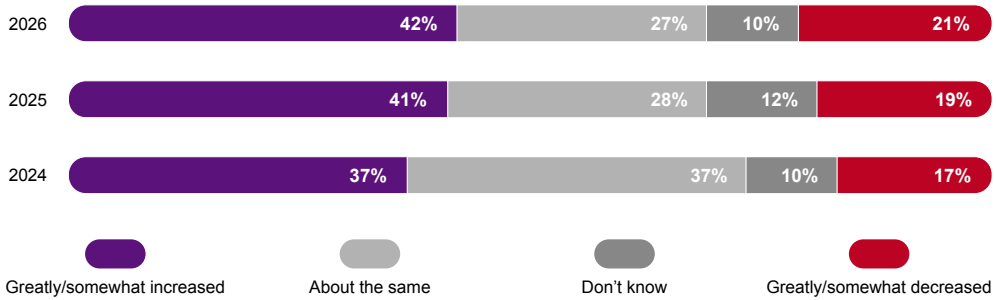
Most Moldovans see informal payments as holding the country back, with half strongly agreeing and only 16% disagreeing. Yet faced with practical scenarios involving small-scale "daily corruption" that would benefit their own family or business, between 30 and 35% of respondents were still willing to tolerate it. Interestingly, the lowest support for such practices was in Chisinau and in the 55+ age group, while the youngest 18-24-years-old respondents were most likely to tolerate gifts to doctors, teachers etc. for personal benefit. This contradiction, or double standard, may slow the cultural shift needed to actually curb corruption.



*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Perceptions of overall corruption levels remain close to what they were in 2025, with slightly fewer people undecided and more taking a clearer stance on whether corruption is growing or declining. This reflects the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International, according to which Moldova's corruption score has remained fairly unchanged since 2023[10]. As in 2025, perceiving corruption as rising correlates strongly with trusting Russian media and distrusting Moldovan media — suggesting possible FIMI influence, which often targets institutional trust through corruption narratives. Still, it would be short-sighted to attribute the public's critical views to FIMI alone.

HOW HAS THE LEVEL OF CORRUPTION CHANGED IN MOLDOVA OVER THE PAST YEAR?



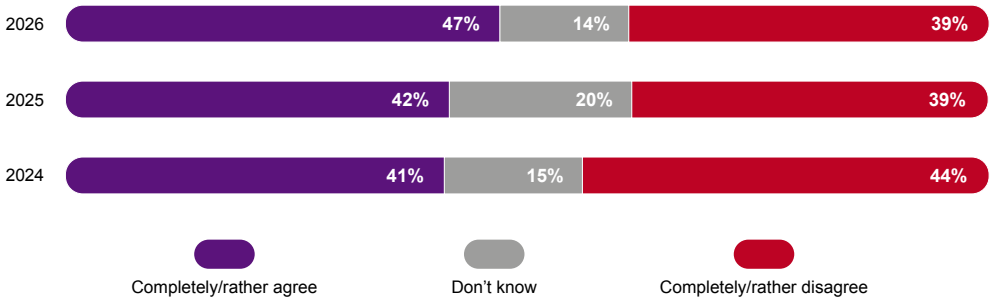
*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

[10] https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/moldova

Trust that taxes are used fairly and transparently rose to 47% in 2026, with the biggest gains among women and the 55+ group — previously more skeptical groups — and regionally in the Center and Chisinau, while the South and UTAG&Taraclia fell below average. This trust correlates with stronger conviction that corruption is declining, higher institutional and media trust, and greater readiness to defend Moldova.

Given these trends, including the double standard noted above, it requires both continued state-level transparency reforms and greater awareness of individuals' role in eradicating "daily corruption" to permanently curb corruption, supported by consistent communication of positive examples and targeted attention to regions most affected by FIMI influence.

THE STATE USES MY TAXES FAIRLY AND TRANSPARENTLY



*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

STRENGTHENING THE DEFENSE SECTOR

A strong defense and security infrastructure is the foundation for protecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as neutralizing external threats. Strengthening defense capabilities alongside transparent communication about security policy builds the public consensus needed to support national interests — a principle central to the Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation Framework 2024-2030. As outlined in the Presidential Vision for Moldova's National Security Strategy, effective security isn't just about protecting citizens and the economy — it's the stable foundation for sustainable prosperity. Strong security enables development, reliable public services, and resilient infrastructure, while also attracting foreign investment and encouraging diaspora return.

Moldova's 2026 security priorities center on countering hybrid threats, advancing EU integration, and securing energy independence.

- Key efforts include the Democratic Resilience Strengthening Plan to counter election interference, cyberattacks, and illicit political financing;
- the National Cybersecurity Programme to protect critical infrastructure;
- defense modernization, including better personnel protection and EU alignment;
- and energy security through closer EU cooperation amid global market volatility.

This analysis examines what is needed to build public understanding and support for Moldova's defense objectives — including awareness of security developments, confidence in policy direction, and trust in the institutions responsible for safeguarding the nation. Public support for national security advancement strongly depends on clear understanding that security is a collective public good requiring shared investment from citizens and institutions alike, extending beyond military concerns to economic stability, social cohesion, and democratic resilience.



STRENGTHENING THE DEFENSE SECTOR – KEY HIGHLIGHTS



CONFIDENCE IN MOLDOVAN SECURITY GROWS, ALTHOUGH NOT EVERYONE FEELS SAFE. The perception that Moldova can feel secure is rising steadily, though it has not reached a majority; while the Center region leads in perceived security, UTAG&Taraclia feel much less safe. Awareness of defense information is growing, particularly among younger adults and in the North, the Center, and the South. Confidence that Moldova can be defended rose substantially after holding steady in 2024-2025, with fewer skeptics remaining.

MOLDOVANS INCREASINGLY WILLING TO TAKE A STAND AND DEFEND THEIR HOME. There is a broad-based rise in resolve and commitment to Moldova in the face of crisis — whether through readiness to fight, willingness to support defense indirectly, staying rather than leaving, or committing to stay neutral and carry on. Fewer people are undecided and more are settling into a clear position, even as reactions diverge between active defense, passive resilience, and departure depending on age and region.

GOVERNANCE AND ENERGY CONCERN MOLDOVANS MORE THAN CONFLICT. Governance and everyday risks — corruption, water pollution, energy instability, disinformation — top the list of likely security threats, outranking military risks like escalation in Transnistria or a direct attack, suggesting that public concern centers more on state strength and practical insecurity than war. Most risk perceptions have held steady or eased.The exceptions include energy security, which has risen to third place, and the Transnistria risk, which has increased but remains comparatively lower. This points to growing unease in specific groups rather than a broad rise overall.

TRANSNISTRIAN REGION: BROAD SUPPORT FOR REINTEGRATION, LIMITED WILLINGNESS TO PAY. Support for reunifying with the Transnistrian region is broad in principle but cools sharply when personal costs are involved, with only 36% willing to share reintegration expenses. Views on Russian Federation troops stationed in the Transnistrian region are still divided, but fewer people are undecided and more leaning toward viewing their presence as a threat.

36% willing to share Transnistrian region reintegration expenses.

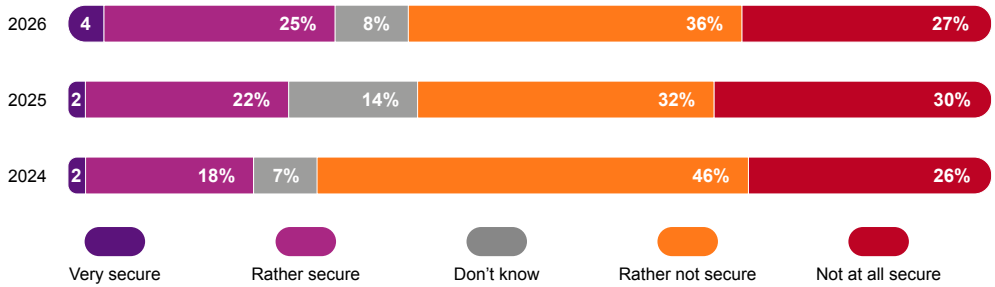
CONFIDENCE IN MOLDOVAN SECURITY GROWS, ALTHOUGH NOT EVERYONE FEELS SAFE

Higher perceived security fosters trust, forward-looking attitudes and positive daily engagement, while stronger social engagement and agency, in turn, boost that sense of security by countering feelings of helplessness. Security deficits, on the contrary, breed anxiety and stress that undermine social functioning, creating fertile ground for narratives that erode trust between groups and institutions.

In 2026, the perception that Moldova can feel secure increased substantially compared to two years prior, reaching 29%, although the majority of the population does not feel secure. Very few are undecided.

- Perceived security is highest in the Center (37%, also the largest increase since 2025), while UTAG&Taraclia feels far less safe at just 11%.
- There is little link between perceived security and how likely people rate various threats to national or regional security, but it correlates strongly with institutional trust (the President, the National Government, the Parliament) and media trust — those trusting Moldovan media feel more secure, while those trusting Russian media feel notably less secure.

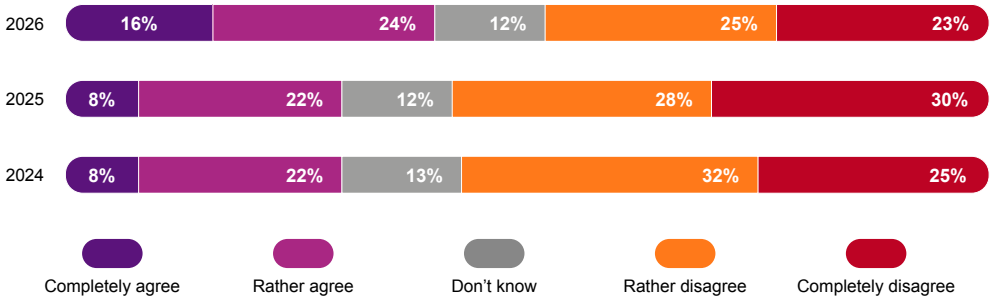
HOW SECURE FROM ANY POSSIBLE THREATS IS MOLDOVA CURRENTLY?



**Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

Awareness of defense information is growing, reaching 44% in 2026. It is currently highest among younger adults aged 18-24, at 59% and has increased over the past year in the North, the Center, and the South regions. Confidence that Moldova can be defended rose substantially after holding steady in 2024-2025, with fewer skeptics remaining.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO DEFEND MOLDOVA IN CASE OF EXTERNAL ATTACK



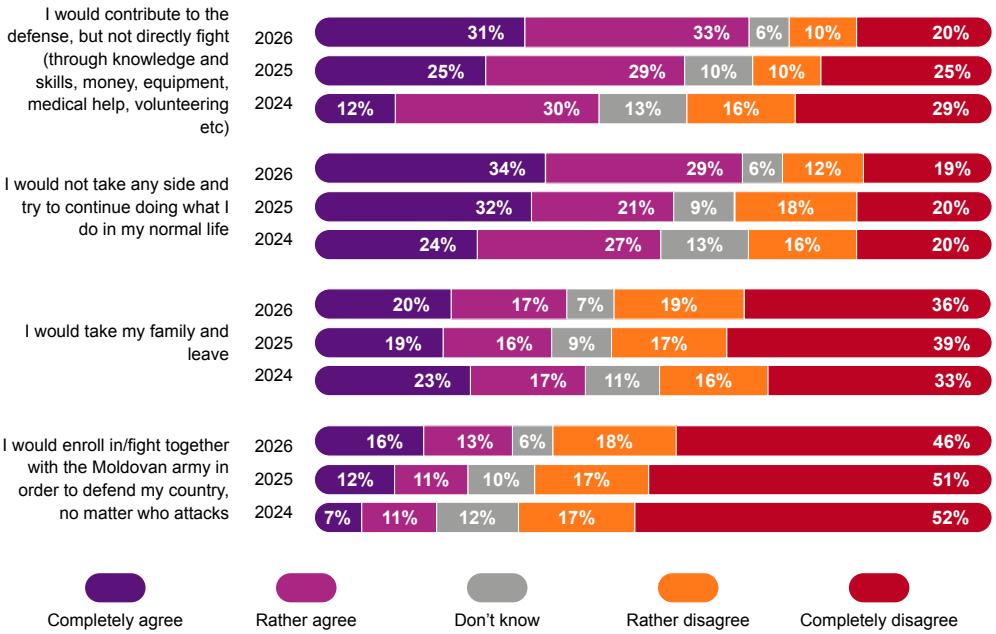
MOLDOVANS INCREASINGLY WILLING TO TAKE A STAND AND DEFEND THEIR HOME

Commitment to defending Moldova in the face of crisis or attack is broadly strengthening — whether through active readiness to fight, indirect defense support (now a clear majority position in 2026), or a more passive stance of staying rather than leaving and remaining neutral while continuing normal life. Fewer people remain undecided, and more are settling into clear positions, even as responses diverge between active defense, passive resilience, and departure depending on age and region.

- Willingness to personally fight for Moldova rose steadily since 2024 to reach 29% in 2026 — driven mainly by men (42%) and the Center/North, though women's readiness nearly doubled (11% to 19%) between 2025-2026. Opposition to this remains the majority view but has eased, with uncertainty roughly halved.
- Willingness to support Moldova's defense indirectly has risen sharply and broadly across genders, ages, and regions since 2024, with support now especially high in the Center, Chisinau, and the South.
- Most respondents (56%) reject the idea of leaving with their family from Moldova in case of a crisis. This, however, masks a sharp age divide, with younger people (especially 18-24) far more willing to leave (62% would) while older respondents (especially those 55+) overwhelmingly favor staying (74%).
- A growing and now clear majority of respondents (62% in 2026, up from about half in 2024) say they would stay neutral and continue normal life rather than take a side — a clear trend seen broadly across genders, ages 35 and older, and most regions, with smaller subgroups, such as younger respondents (18-34) or UTAG&Taraclia more internally divided on this question.

Overall, commitment to defense is growing, though readiness diverges by group — younger people are more inclined to leave, regions are unevenly engaged, and willingness to support defense indirectly runs well ahead of readiness for military defense. To even out and further strengthen this overall trend, targeted civic defense programs (e.g., civil defense training, volunteer coordination, non-combat pathways) could help convert general resolve into concrete readiness.

IF MOLDOVA WERE INVADED AND ITS SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY WERE UNDER ATTACK...



Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

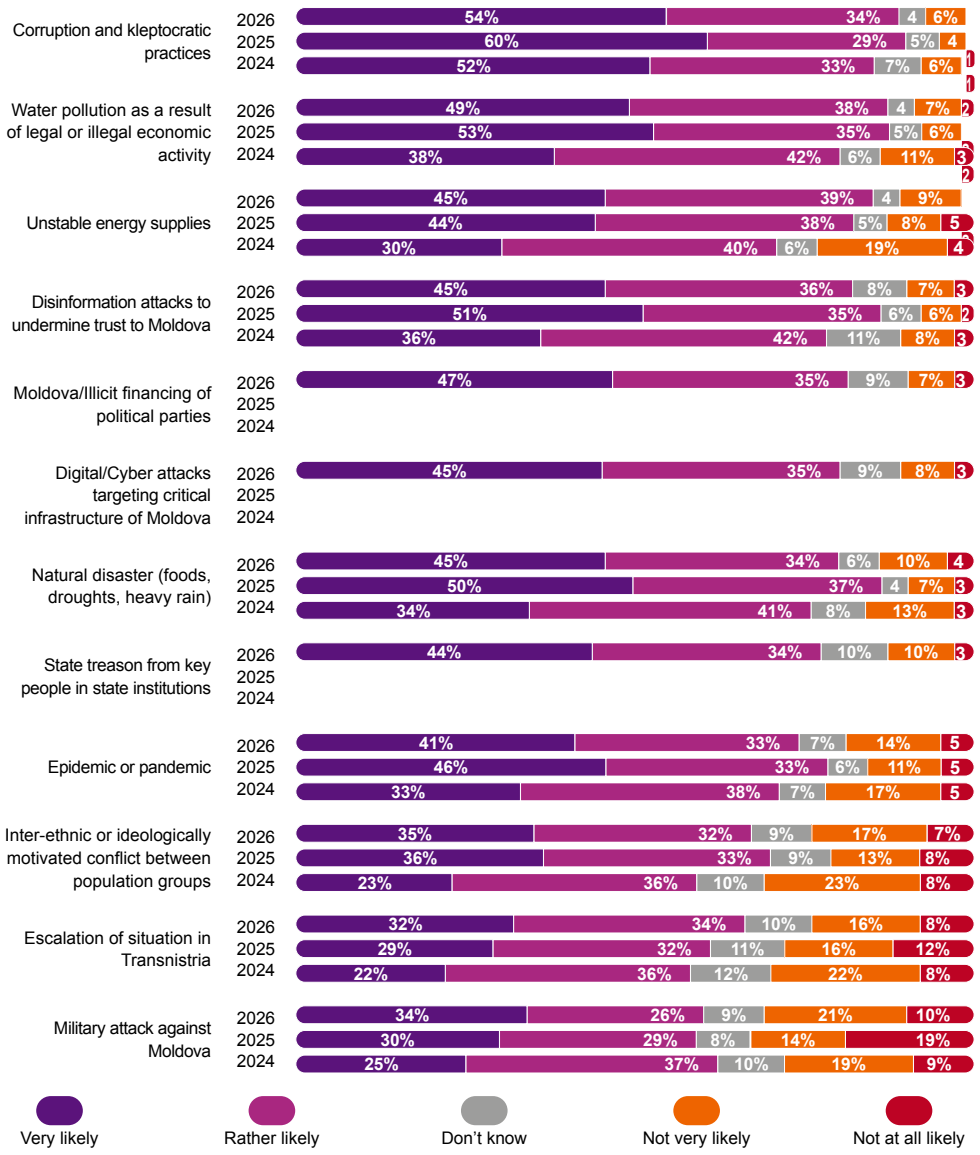
GOVERNANCE AND ENERGY CONCERN MOLDOVANS MORE THAN CONFLICT

Moldovans see nearly all threats listed in this chapter as likely, but governance and everyday risks — such as corruption and kleptocracy, water pollution, energy instability, disinformation — top the list, outranking military threats like escalation in Transnistria or threat of a direct attack. This suggests public concern centers more on how well the state is doing and quality of governance, or around the practical insecurity experienced first-hand, rather than fear of military conflicts.

Perceptions vary by group: 18–24-year-olds are less likely than others to expect escalation in Transnistria; rural residents are more likely than urban residents to see military attack as a real risk, with South Moldova standing out as especially concerned; ethnic minorities and those who primarily speak Russian/other languages are noticeably less likely to see a military attack as likely.

Compared to 2025, most threat perceptions have held at a steady, high level or eased slightly. The exceptions are energy security and the risk associated with Transnistria, which have both increased— though the Transnistria risk remains comparatively lower. This points to growing unease in specific groups rather than a broad rise overall.

- Energy security concerns, which had scored below average in the Center and the South in 2025, rose notably in 2026, bringing all regions roughly to the same level.
- Perceived disinformation threat, was highest in 2025 among more educated and financially well-off respondents. Since then, it has eased to roughly average levels in this group.
- Perceived risk of escalation in Transnistria rose among women, the 55+ age group, and in the South and UTAG&Taraclia — regions where it was previously below average.



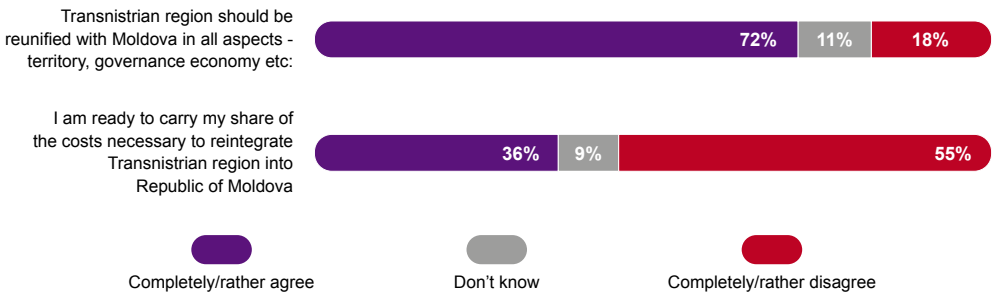
*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

TRANSNISTRIAN REGION: BROAD SUPPORT FOR REINTEGRATION, LIMITED WILLINGNESS TO PAY

Resolving Transnistria's status and achieving reunification is vital for Moldova — preventing permanent division through EU integration, securing stable state borders, eliminating a Russian-backed stronghold and enabling demilitarization, bringing the region's economy and population into Moldova's single legal and regulatory space, and restoring full sovereignty over its internationally recognized borders.

A strong majority (72%) back reunification with Transnistrian region in all aspects – territory, governance, economy etc, – but willingness to actually bear the costs of reintegration drops sharply, to just 36%. Support for reunification and cost-sharing is notably weaker among women, in UTAG&Taraclia, and among Russian/other-language speakers, while Romanian speakers and men are more supportive on both fronts.

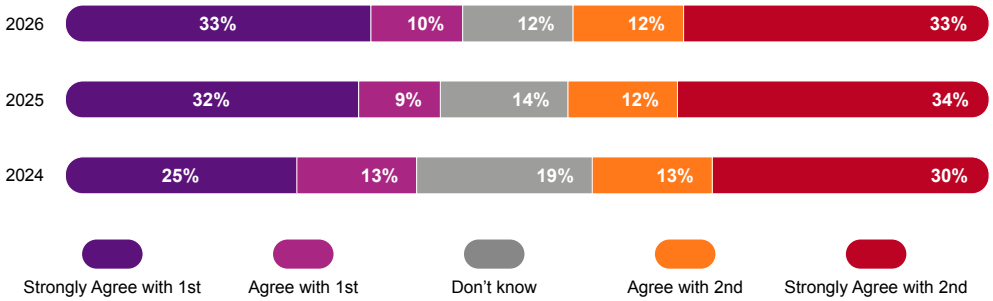
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (coded) (n=1 216)



**Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

The understanding that Russian Federation troops stationed in the Transnistrian region are a threat to Moldovan security is growing gradually; still,opinion on Russia's military presence there remains split, with the gap between whether they are seen as "threat" or "peacekeeper" nearly closing by 2026. The main change is a hardening of views — strong agreement that it's a direct threat rose notably over the two-year period, while uncertainty roughly halved — most visible among older respondents and in the Center region.

With which of the two statements to you agree with: 1 - RF military units stationed in Transnistrian region are a direct threat to Moldova or 2 - RF military units stationed in Transnistrian region are peacekeepers and would never threaten Moldova (n=1 216)



**Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

Support for Transnistria's reintegration correlates closely with perceiving it as a security threat and with how high the escalation risk is deemed to be. Support is also higher among those with greater institutional trust and trust in Moldovan media in the state language, and lower among those trusting Russian Federation media. This suggests these positions depend strongly on people's more general political attitudes, as well as vulnerability to FIMI or emotional messaging around the topic. Willingness to pay for reintegration follows similar patterns but is additionally shaped by financial standing — those facing hardship are far less willing to contribute, while better-off respondents are more so — suggesting the support-versus-willingness-to-pay gap is largely driven by financial constraints, and could narrow if those constraints find relief.

NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Protecting Moldova's interests and national security within its regional context depends on the public having a clear, comprehensive understanding of how developments in the wider region — and their cascading effects across governance, the economy, domestic security, education, and other societal dimensions — ultimately shape Moldova's own security and ripple outward to affect every level of society. The corresponding NIR Index captures this dynamic by measuring public perceptions of various regional threats, expectations about how these risks may evolve, and views on what actions are needed to strengthen both national and regional security.

Moldova's regional security landscape is shaped by a number of interlocking factors: the war in Ukraine, which has pushed Moldova to reassess its neutrality and modernize its defense; persistent Russian hybrid threats and disinformation aimed at slowing Western integration; historic energy vulnerability now being addressed through new EU/Romanian grid connections; and deepening Western integration, where EU membership enjoys broad support but NATO accession remains politically divisive.

Moldova's national security cannot be viewed in isolation: it is inherently tied to the success of broader regional security efforts, including international partnerships, collaborative regional initiatives, and external support mechanisms that reinforce the country's resilience. Meeting these regional security challenges requires sustained public backing for regional defense and security objectives, both domestically and in conjunction with Moldova's strategic allies. Achieving this depends on transparent, ongoing dialogue about regional partnership initiatives and on clearly communicating why coordinated national and regional security matters.



NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT – KEY HIGHLIGHTS



MOLDOVA'S EVOLVING REGIONAL SECURITY LOGIC: FROM NEUTRALITY TO PARTNERSHIP. Non-provocation remains the most popular security strategy among Moldovans, though its dominance is fading. Cooperation with the EU has risen to become the second most popular choice for security guarantee. Meanwhile, support for actively preparing to defend against regional threats has also grown steadily.

STEADY THREAT PERCEPTIONS, ONE RISING CONCERN. A potential global economic or financial crisis remains seen as Moldova's most acute regional threat, with overall threat perceptions largely unchanged since 2025. The clearest shift is growing concern over the possibility for the closure of Black Sea navigation, alongside a slight easing of concern over refugee flows.

AMID SHIFTING ALLIANCES, EUROPE REMAINS THE CLEAR FAVORITE. Regional security perceptions continue to polarize, but the European Union and its largest member states stand out as consistently positive partners. Views of Ukraine remain the most divided and continue polarizing, alongside growing polarization around the USA, while perceptions of the EAEU and Russia have grown slightly less positive since 2025.

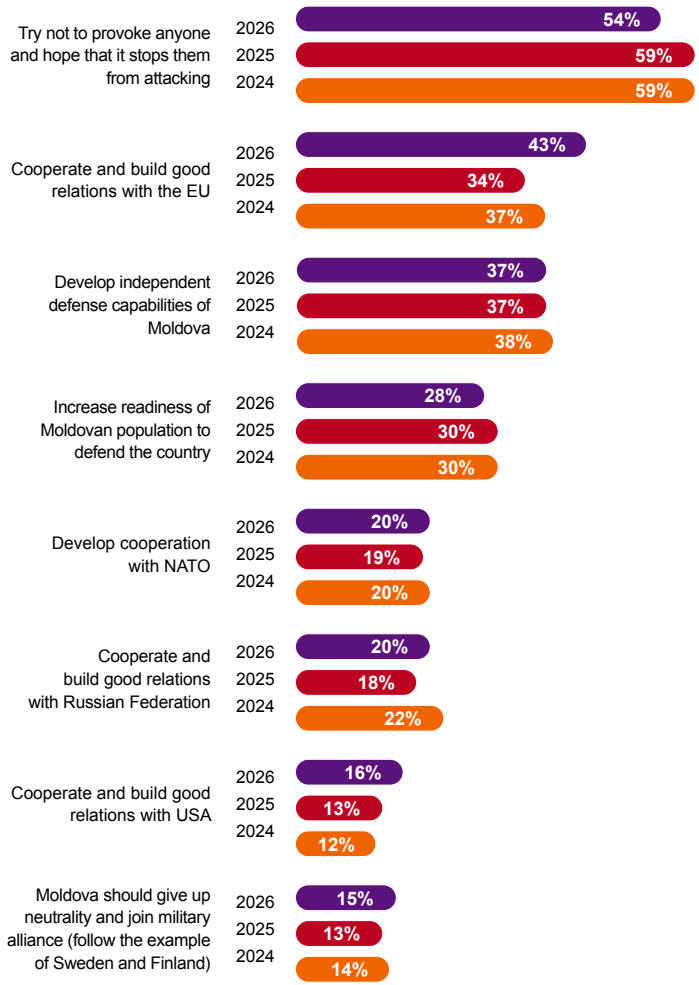


MOLDOVA'S EVOLVING REGIONAL SECURITY LOGIC: FROM NEUTRALITY TO PARTNERSHIP

When asked about the measures needed to protect Moldova's neutrality and prevent a possible military attack, the most popular first-choice strategy remains a cautious, non-confrontational approach, though its lead has eased slightly. The clearest shift is a growing preference for closer EU relations as the top priority, now the main gainer, while national defense development and good relations with Russia have kept steady. Hard-security options like NATO cooperation remain secondary, suggesting the overall trend leans toward caution and EU partnership rather than military alignment.

- Support for non-provocation is higher among those who view Russian troops in the Transnistrian region as peacekeepers and correlates with lower defense readiness overall.
- Respondents with positive views of the EU and NATO's role in Moldovan security, higher institutional trust and trust towards Moldovan media in state language, as well as distrust of Russian Federation media, are also less likely to rely on non-provocation as security guarantee.

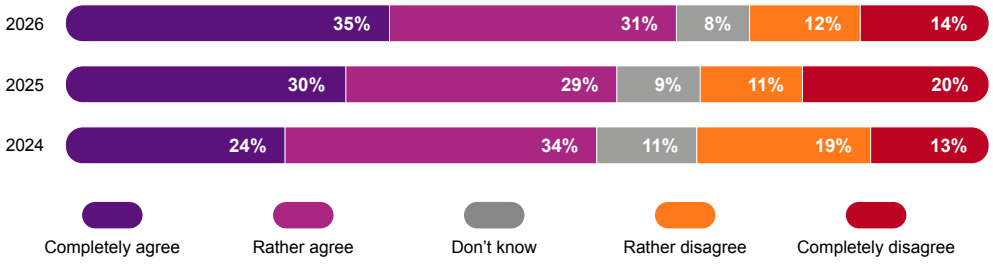
WHAT MEASURES SHOULD MOLDOVA TAKE, IN ORDER TO PROTECT ITS NEUTRALITY AND PREVENT POSSIBLE MILITARY ATTACK AGAINST MOLDOVA?



Support for Moldova actively preparing to defend itself against possible threats in the region has grown steadily and is now the dominant view at about two-thirds agreement, driven mainly by rising strong agreement rather than a shift away from opposition. The trend is especially pronounced in the North and the South, while Chisinau shows a more divided mood, with rising disagreement.

The clearest takeaway is that while the public still leans first toward caution, the preferred security strategy is shifting from passive caution toward active engagement, as a clear and strengthening majority now backs actively preparing to defend the country. These shifts aren't mutually exclusive but reflect a broader move away from purely defensive neutrality toward a combined diplomatic and defense-oriented readiness.

MOLDOVA NEEDS TO ACTIVELY PREPARE TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST POSSIBLE THREATS IN THE REGION (N=1 216)



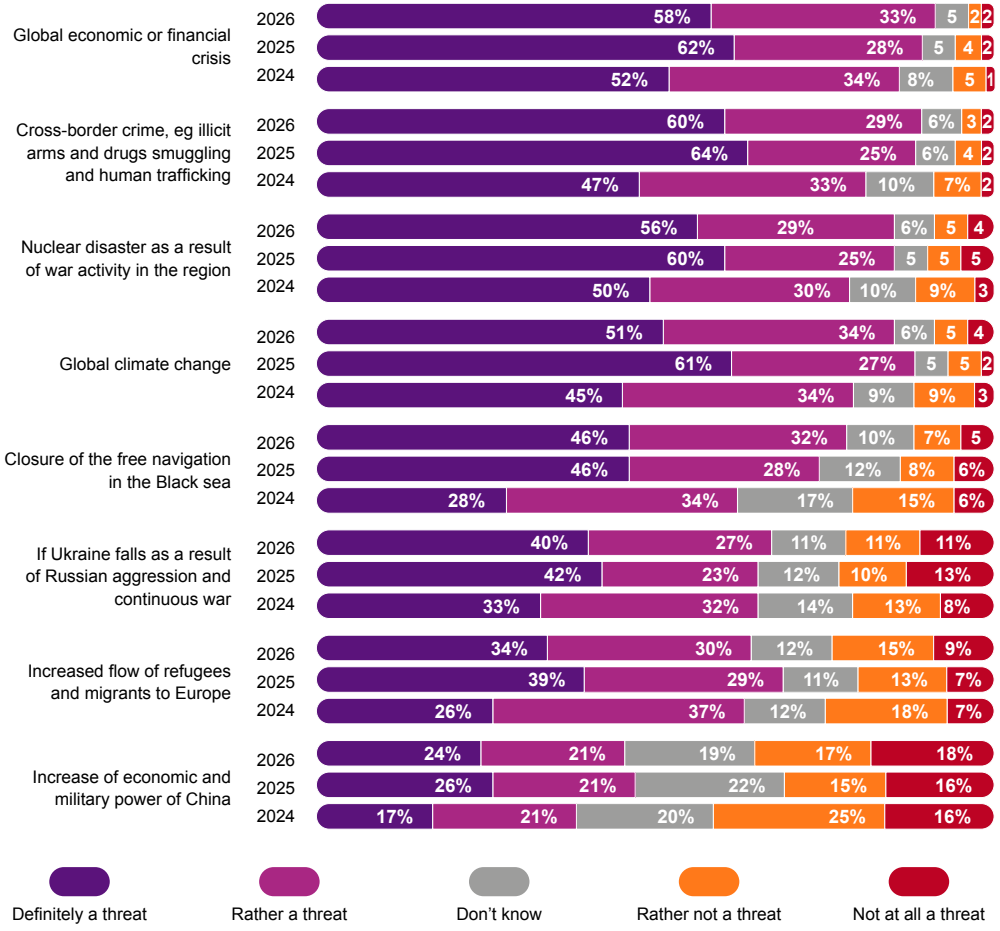
*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

STEADY THREAT PERCEPTIONS, ONE RISING CONCERN

While overall threat perceptions remained largely unchanged since 2025, a global economic or financial crisis and cross-border crime remain seen as Moldova's most acute regional threats. Nuclear disaster linked to a war and climate change is also widely seen as a threat, by roughly 85%. The sharpest divide is over Ukraine: people who are more pro-European, pro-NATO, or who see Russian troops in the Transnistrian region as a threat are much more likely to say Ukraine falling would threaten Moldova. By contrast, Russian-speaking, ethnic minority, or Russia-sympathetic groups are clearly less likely to see that scenario as threatening.

Compared to previous years, the clearest shift is growing concern over potential closure of Black Sea navigation, which rose sharply, from around 60% in 2024 to nearly 80% in 2026, while skepticism and uncertainty both declined. The shift holds equally across the main demographic groups, while being more pronounced among those who see the Russian Federation's impact on Moldovan security as negative and those who have a favorable view of NATO and the EU.

Another notable change is a slight easing of concern over refugee flows, mainly among those with lower education, the unemployed and students, 18-24-year-olds, and 45-54-year-olds — the latter having been most concerned in 2025.



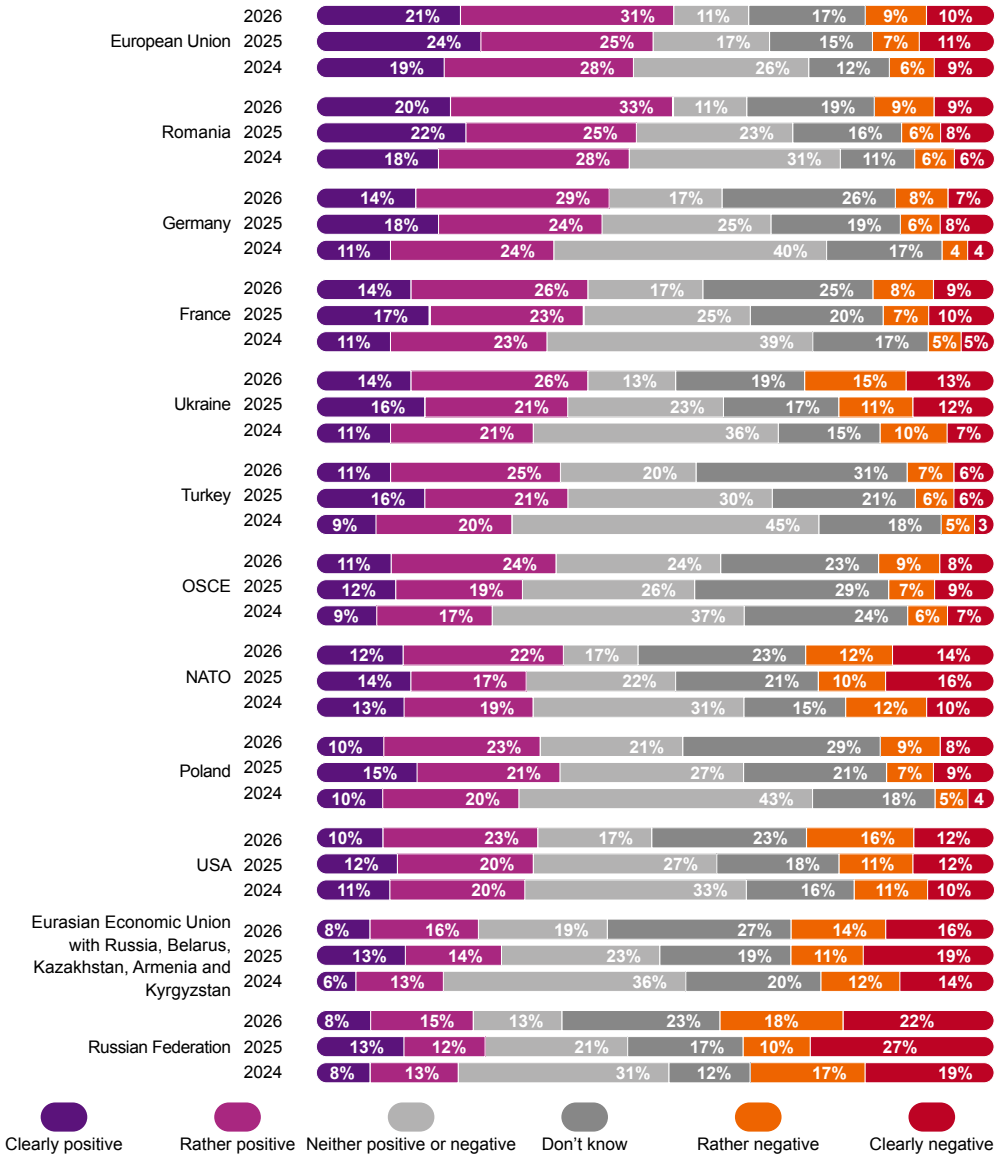
*Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

AMID SHIFTING ALLIANCES, EUROPE REMAINS THE CLEAR FAVORITE

The EU and Romania continue to strengthen their position as Moldova's most trusted partners for the country's stability and security, both rated positively by a majority. Germany and France are also seen as net positives, with over 40% favorable views against just 15% unfavorable. The Russian Federation remains the most negatively perceived actor, and views on the Eurasian Economic Union have likewise turned more negative overall, reversing the modest gains seen between 2024 and 2025. NATO draws some of the most divided opinions, while views on the USA and Ukraine are growing increasingly polarized, with both positive and negative assessments rising notably since 2024.

- The starkest regional gap is in UTAG&Taraclia, which favors Russia and the EAEU over the EU, NATO, and Ukraine. The same pattern shows up along language and ethnic lines, with Romanian-speakers pro-EU/anti-Russia and Russian-speakers/ethnic minorities leaning the opposite way.
- By gender, the difference is less about direction and more about certainty, with women more likely to say "don't know" and men giving more definitive answers.

Over two previous years, opinions have clearly polarized, with neutral views declining sharply across the board. For the EU, Romania, and Germany, this perception shift skewed positive, despite some rise in negative and "don't know" responses. For Russia and the EAEU, neutral views also dropped sharply, but opinions split across positive, negative, and undecided without a clear directional pattern.



Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Information Resilience (NIR) Index demonstrates that Moldova's societal resilience strengthened between 2024 and 2026 despite a highly challenging environment marked by elections, the EU referendum, regional security instability, and persistent foreign information manipulation and interference. Across most indicators, public confidence, civic engagement, institutional trust, democratic commitment, economic resilience, and support for the country's strategic direction have improved. At the same time, significant polarization remains along regional, linguistic, ethnic, and geopolitical lines, representing Moldova's most important long-term vulnerability.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: GROWING SUPPORT, PERSISTENT POLARIZATION

Support for EU accession has increased steadily, with 57% of respondents now supporting membership compared with 52% in 2024. Citizens are increasingly willing to accept the costs and reforms associated with accession and hold more positive expectations regarding the impact of EU membership on the economy, public services, governance, and quality of life. The elevated fears and uncertainty observed during the referendum period appear to have subsided. Attitudes toward EU integration are closely linked to broader levels of institutional trust and media consumption patterns. Citizens who trust Moldovan institutions and domestic media are substantially more likely to support European integration, while trust in Russian Federation media is associated with more negative attitudes.

SOCIAL COHESION: TRUST, PRIDE, AND CIVIC AGENCY ARE STRENGTHENING

The findings indicate an increasingly cohesive society. Support for democratic governance remains stable and strong, while support for key democratic principles such as fair elections, accountability, rule of law, and protection of rights has reached exceptionally high levels across the population. Trust in institutions has improved significantly, being particularly high in sectors that citizens encounter in everyday life, including education, healthcare, and local government. National pride remains exceptionally strong, with over 90% of respondents expressing pride in being Moldovan citizens. Satisfaction with state-provided public services has also increased steadily over the last three years.

Importantly, citizens increasingly believe they can influence what happens in society. This growth in personal agency is associated with higher trust in elections, stronger confidence in institutions, greater civic participation, and stronger support for Moldova's democratic development. The findings suggest that social cohesion is becoming both broader and deeper. At the same time, despite the overall positive trend, it is essential to pay close attention to subgroups that remain less involved and cohesive, especially regionally.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE: STRONGER SELF-RELIANCE AMID CONTINUING CONCERNS

The public strongly supports strategic economic priorities such as innovation, trade diversification, infrastructure development, and energy security. Nevertheless, citizens remain more divided on whether Moldova's overall economic trajectory is moving in the right direction.

At the household level, resilience indicators have improved substantially. More respondents report saving for the future, adopting entrepreneurial attitudes, seeking more effective ways to work, and feeling capable of supporting themselves and their families during economic hardship. At the same time, many households continue to rely on diaspora support, and some groups remain vulnerable to economic shocks and migration pressures.

The findings also reveal a persistent contradiction regarding corruption. While most citizens believe corruption harms Moldova's development, a significant propor-

tion continues to tolerate everyday forms of corruption when personal benefits are involved. This suggests that anti-corruption efforts must address social norms and behavior in addition to institutional reforms.

DEFENSE AND SECURITY: A MORE SECURITY-CONSCIOUS SOCIETY

Confidence in Moldova's ability to protect itself has grown markedly. Awareness of security and defense issues has increased, and citizens are demonstrating stronger commitment to supporting the country's resilience and defense efforts. Support for indirect forms of defense participation is now widespread, while willingness to fight personally for Moldova has also increased. Notably, citizens tend to view corruption, disinformation, energy insecurity, and governance weaknesses as more immediate threats than direct military aggression. This reflects a broad understanding that security extends beyond military matters and encompasses institutional, economic, and societal resilience.

Support for the reintegration of the Transnistrian region remains strong in principle, but willingness to bear the financial costs of reintegration is much lower. This gap suggests that support is genuine but constrained by economic considerations.

NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT: FROM PASSIVE NEUTRALITY TO ACTIVE PREPAREDNESS

The report finds evidence of a gradual transformation in Moldovan security thinking. While neutrality remains popular, public opinion increasingly supports active preparation against regional threats and stronger cooperation with European partners. Citizens appear to be moving away from a purely passive understanding of neutrality toward a model that combines neutrality with preparedness and international cooperation.

The European Union and Romania continue to be viewed as Moldova's most positive external partners. At the same time, perceptions of Russia, Ukraine, NATO, and the United States remain highly polarized. Regional, linguistic, and ethnic divisions, as well as differences in trusted sources of information, continue to be linked to diverse attitudes toward international security and geopolitics.

SEVERAL THEMES EMERGE CONSISTENTLY ACROSS ALL FIVE PILLARS:

- Trust is the strongest predictor of resilience. Citizens who trust institutions and domestic media consistently exhibit greater support for democracy, European integration, economic reforms, and national security policies.
- Information environments matter. Trust in Russian Federation media is repeatedly associated with lower institutional trust, lower civic agency, weaker support for strategic national priorities, and greater susceptibility to divisive narratives.
- Polarization remains Moldova's principal vulnerability. Regional, linguistic, ethnic, and geopolitical divisions continue to influence attitudes across all strategic pillars.
- Young people represent both an opportunity and a risk. They are generally more democratic, pro-European, and informed, but are also more likely to consider emigration during periods of uncertainty.
- Visible improvements in everyday life matter more than abstract messaging. Trust grows most where citizens see tangible results through public services, local governance, education, and healthcare.

The report's strongest finding is that Moldova's resilience has generally strengthened between 2024 and 2026 despite intense disinformation pressure, electoral contestation, and regional security turbulence. However, long-term success will depend on reducing persistent societal polarization, maintaining institutional trust, and ensuring that the benefits of reforms are visible across all regions and population groups.

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CENTER FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
AND COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

53, Sfatul Tarii str., Chisinau, MD2004
+373 68 604 902
info@stratcom.md

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