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Chisinau

The European Commission presents policy reforms to modernise the Republic of Moldova's research and innovation system

The European Commission presented today key policy recommendations to help modernise the science and innovation sectors of the Republic of Moldova. This is the first time that a country associated to the EU makes voluntary use of the [Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility](#), an instrument that gives governments practical support to identify, implement and evaluate those reforms needed to enhance the quality of their public research and innovation systems.

Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"I am proud that the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility has been called upon by Moldova to support its efforts to make the country more knowledge-intensive. The recommendations in the report are stepping stones for smart reforms, helping to get the most out of the Moldovan research and innovation ecosystem".*

The Peer Review has taken place from November 2015 to April 2016, at the request of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, and was carried out by a Panel of high-level independent experts (Poland, Greece, Austria, Romania and Netherlands) and senior officials from EU governments (Austria, Estonia). The Moldovan national authorities expressed their strong political commitment to this exercise.

The report presents key policy messages and operational recommendations to help modernise the research and innovation system of the country. These were presented during a public event hosted by the Moldovan Academy of Sciences with key representatives of Moldovan research and innovation institutions, industry and the broader stakeholders' community. The discussion around the main findings of the Peer Review was followed by an exchange of views on the vision for reforms of the science and innovation structures of the country.

The Peer Review report presents seven policy messages addressed to the Moldovan authorities:

1. ***Embed Research and Innovation (R&I) policy in the overall economic policy strategy of the country. Improving synergies between Moldova's R&I strategy and the country's overall socio-economic ambitions is key. This cannot be reached without ambitious reforms of the national R&I system, strong and determined priority-setting, and continuous involvement of stakeholders in order to generate an ownership of these reforms.***

2. ***Improve the governance of the national R&I system by strengthening the political responsibility for R&I with a dedicated Ministerial responsibility.*** *The panel is not convinced of the added value of the inter-ministerial Council for R&I announced by the government.*
3. ***Create an independent, transparent and accountable R&I implementation Agency*** *which concentrates and allocates all available R&I funding on the basis of international standards. The combination of a Ministerial responsibility for R&I policy-making with an independent Agency that manages R&I funds will allow the Moldovan Academy of Sciences to focus on its role as major research performer in the country.*
4. ***Redress the binary research and education system of Moldova,*** *whereby universities are mostly concentrated on "teaching" and institutes on "research". The circulation of knowledge and human resources throughout the country's public system is now more essential than ever before. Incentives for cooperation between universities (where the young generation studies) and research institutes (with ageing research staff) should be a driving force of the reforms.*
5. ***Safeguard the public R&I capacity of Moldova*** *by ensuring that the physical, intellectual and human capital of its research institutions is maintained and eventually reinforced. In return, systematic evaluation procedures for public research organizations and higher education institutions should be set up to progressively link public R&I funding to performance in the medium-term, thus rewarding quality research. In addition, the share of competitive funding allocated to R&I needs to be increased to stimulate competition.*
6. ***Take resolute action to improve the employment and funding opportunities, working conditions and career perspectives of researchers,*** *including notably young and female scientific talents. Open and merit-based recruitment practices and structured and high-quality PhD programs are essential to modernize the system. Salaries, in particular for entry levels, should be revisited and scientific achievements should be rewarded.*
7. ***Urgently review the framework conditions for innovation by putting in place a coherent set of policy measures*** *to create and stimulate a supportive environment for business engagement in R&I activities, including both non-financial tools (a legal environment supportive of spin-offs and knowledge transfer, better opportunities to fund risky projects) and the increased use of public funding to leverage business R&I activities. In relation to the latter, the panel is of the opinion that the artificial administrative barrier of accreditation for allocating R&I funds to the business sector should be abolished.*

The report presents as well the rationale for each of those messages and discusses in detail the twenty-four operational recommendations proposed by the panel, which are clustered into thematic areas. As emphasized by the panel, it is the country's responsibility to ensure the follow-up to the Peer Review and implement the recommendations.

Background:

The [Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility](#) provides expertise and operational support to the design, implementation and evaluation of structural reforms of the national research and innovation systems through a broad range of services: country peer reviews, support to specific policy reforms, and project-based mutual learning exercises to improve policy-making practice. It is funded under [Horizon 2020](#), the EU research and innovation programme.

For more information:

- [Horizon 2020](#)
- [Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility](#)