



This project is funded  
by the European Union

## PRESS RELEASE



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

### **The European Union will contribute to income generation and modernization of public services in Gagauzia and Taraclia**

**13.05.2016** – New jobs, new business development opportunities, better and more accessible public services, more sustainable communities. Here are some benefits for the inhabitants of Gagauzia region and Taraclia district, from the project „Support to agriculture and rural development” (SARD), launched today in Comrat.

Financed by the EU with 6.5 million euro, and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), SARD Project aims to build confidence and intensify the cooperation between national authorities/structures and the regional ones from Gagauzia region and Taraclia district in the next three years. This will boost socio-economic development of the region and of the Republic of Moldova overall.

At the launching event of SARD project, Gagauzia's Governor Irina Vlah expressed her gratitude to the development partners for giving "priority to the region". "This project is aimed to solving the most important problems of local communities in Gagauzia. The successful implementation of this initiative will contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region and of southern Moldova", said Irina Vlah.

The proposed intervention will enhance, in particular, the competitiveness of the agricultural sector of the region. In 2015, the poverty level in the southern region of the Republic of Moldova and in Gagauzia was 8 times higher than in Chisinau, according to the Ministry of Economy. If a decade ago Gagauzia was without a shred of doubt an agricultural region, now the role of this sector for the employment and overall output of the region is falling, which affects the living standard of the population.

"The enhancement of dialogue and empowerment of communities will enable citizens together with local authorities and civil society to determine their priorities for development and thus determine their own future", said Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador of the European Union to Moldova.

In the framework of SARD Project, EU and UNDP's efforts will be focused on three main pillars. **The first component of the project** will strive to enhance the dialogue between national and local authorities in the field of agriculture and will empower the communities from the region

to actively engage in decision-making and local development process. Hence, population from all regions of the country will fully benefit from the National Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy.

**The second component** is dedicated to local entrepreneurship and SMEs development. The best business development projects, including start-ups in Gagauzia and Taraclia will receive European grants. Through the Syslab Centre in Comrat new jobs will be created and the youth from the region will benefit from small grants, training and mentoring for business development.

**Under the third component**, SARD Project will renovate social infrastructure in 20 communities from UTA Gagauzia and Taraclia district; and will create at least 7 local public services using the modality of inter-municipal cooperation projects. Hence, 120,000 persons, which represents almost the entire population of the region, will benefit from improved services and renovated infrastructure.

“Our experience shows that addressing complex development challenges calls for a holistic and integrated approach, which yields innovative solutions and best practices. Some of the success stories, which we are all proud of will now be up-scaled and replicated in the Gagauzia region and Taraclia district, i.e. mobilized communities and empowered and engaged civil society; responsible and effective public institutions; more employment opportunities for women and men, improved infrastructure and quality of life”, said Dafina Gercheva, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Moldova.

For the first time in the Republic of Moldova, under the SARD Project, the LEADER program shall be piloted, which proved to be an effective local development tool in many European countries. The Leader approach represents a modality that allows local actors to create Local Action Groups under public-private partnerships, to determine together the local needs, to capitalise local resources and to contribute to community development by a development strategy drafted and implemented at local level.

Present at the launch of SARD project, the Prime Minister Pavel Filip stressed the importance of this project for Moldova. "People and land are perhaps the most important development resources for Moldova. That is why a project like this one we are launching today is of utter importance. It helps us to value human potential of this country through education and involvement in community development and also stimulates local development by supporting those people who want to start a business in agriculture, and also by projects developing the local infrastructure", said Pavel Filip.

The Project “Support to agriculture and rural development” (SARD) will be implemented during 2016-2018 by the United Nations Development Programme with the financial assistance of the European Union. The overall budget of the project is 6.5 million euro.

**More about the SARD Project is available:**

On the website of UNDP-Moldova: [www.md.undp.org](http://www.md.undp.org)

Facebook: [Sard Gagauzia Taraclia](#)

**For additional information, please contact:**

Natalia Costas, National Communication Consultant, SARD Project

Tel.: 069 22 11 41; E-mail: [natalia.costas@undp.org](mailto:natalia.costas@undp.org)