

HUMAN SECURITY AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA. INSTITUTIONAL AND CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract:

This study proposes an analysis of the multidimensional implications of forced displacement in the Republic of Moldova through the lens of human security. It integrates legal-institutional, socio-economic, and community-based approaches to examine the national response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Particular attention is given to the alignment of Moldova's normative and institutional frameworks with international and European standards, emphasizing the role of national institutions and international partners in ensuring protection and access to essential services. By applying the concept of human security, the research provides a deeper understanding of the challenges of integration under temporary protection, encompassing economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions, while identifying structural limitations that may hinder the implementation of a sustainable, rights-based strategy.

Building on key policy instruments, the study explores how person-centred approaches and strengthened inter-institutional coordination can transform integration into an opportunity for social cohesion and resilience. Framing Moldova's response through a human security perspective also generates clearer directions for monitoring and evaluation, enabling institutions to assess both systemic outcomes and the lived experiences of displaced persons. The study is carried out within the SNIS-supported project "Camps and Camp-Like Settings in Urban Environments: Bridging Humanitarian and Development Activities" and the national initiative "SENREMO-The National Security of the Republic of Moldova in the Context of EU Accession".

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Introduction

Topicality of the subject: Armed conflicts, political crises, the degradation of socio-economic conditions, current geopolitical transformations have led to a largely forced human mobility, a phenomenon that has become a defining element of the international agenda.¹ In this context, human security, understood as the multidimensional protection of individuals against risks that threaten life, dignity and livelihoods, acquires increased relevance². The Republic of Moldova is at the centre of such a regional dynamic, as it is directly affected by the refugee crisis, triggered by the Russian military aggression against Ukraine. If in recent decades our state was mainly perceived as a country of emigration and transit, Moldova became, after February 2022, a first destination for people seeking international protection. Thus, the Republic of Moldova has assumed a significant role in the humanitarian architecture of Eastern Europe³.

At the same time, this reconfiguration took place in a precarious domestic context, marked by persistent economic vulnerabilities, limited institutional resources and acute demographic problems, such as the aging of the population and the emigration of the active workforce. Recent analyses on multidimensional poverty, carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics and UNDP Moldova, confirm the pressure exerted on the state's capacity to provide adequate social services to both the local population and the new vulnerable groups⁴. In such circumstances, the massive flow of displaced people from Ukraine has tested the resilience of national institutions and host communities, revealed both the potential for solidarity mobilization and the limits of social infrastructure and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms.

In the face of these challenges, the state has initiated the transition from emergency interventions to integrated and coherent policies to manage forced displacement. The adoption of the “National Programme on the Phased Integration of Foreigners for the period 2025-2027”⁵ marks an important step towards alignment with European standards and the principles of the human rights-based approach. The document aims to ensure equitable access to education, health, housing, the labour market and social services, accompanied by measures to strengthen social cohesion. Also, the “Regional Refugee Response Plan 2025 -

¹ Serghei Sprincean, *Human security and the consolidation of the national security system*, “Interconnections of Social Integration and the Consolidation of the National Security System”, Chisinau, 2022, pp. 329–359, https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/329-359.pdf (15.10.2025)

² Mahbub-ul-Haq, *New Imperatives of Human Security*, “World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues”, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1995, pp. 68–73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45064264> (03.10.2025)

³ Alexandru Guigov, *Challenges of integrating beneficiaries of temporary protection into the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, Chisinau, 2025, pp. 320–336, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (20.10.2025)

⁴ Inga Grigoriu, *The Imperative of Social Cohesion between Host Communities and Displaced Groups: Challenges and Solutions for the Republic of Moldova*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, Chisinau, 2025, pp. 344–358, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (20.10.2025)

⁵ Government of the Republic of Moldova, *National Program on the phased integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova for the period 2025–2027*, https://gov.md/sites/default/files/media/documents/sedinte-de-guvern/2025-05/NU-236-MAI-2025_0.pdf (5.10.2025)

2026 - Moldova Chapter”¹, developed by UNHCR in cooperation with national authorities and international organizations, provides a strategic framework for intervention that highlights the need for multisectoral, participatory and sustainable approaches.

A crucial role in this process lies with civil society and local public authorities. The rapid mobilization of NGOs, churches, community centres and volunteers in the first months of the crisis demonstrated a remarkable capacity for a solidarity response. At the same time, this civic effort has revealed structural vulnerabilities in resource management, inter-institutional coordination and public communication, generating the need for stable and predictable cooperation mechanisms between the state and the non-governmental sector.

Although surveys on population perceptions indicate a high level of acceptance of refugees, there is a risk of social tensions arising amid economic pressures and competition for resources. Data from the “Quality of Life Survey - Republic of Moldova”² and the “Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS) Moldova”³ highlight emerging divergences between the expectations of host communities and the needs of refugees and thus underline the importance of a transparent communication strategy and participatory policies. Degree of research on the topic: Considering the European framework for the integration of migrants, policies and priorities relevant to national harmonisation “Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027”⁴ and “Beyond the Common Basic Principles on Integration”⁵, refugee protection is an area that is intensively explored at the level of European states. Over time, they have developed robust conceptual and institutional frameworks centred on shared values, fundamental rights, and social cohesion. At the same time, the international literature consistently examines the interaction between refugees and host societies, through a complex, multidimensional approach, which integrates, for example, public policies, living conditions, labour market dynamics, community cohesion, and others^{6 7}.

In contrast to this rich framework, national research in the Republic of Moldova is incipient and, possibly, still limited in terms of empirical studies, also considering the available resources of the academic environment, such as financial, logistical, human resources. Under such conditions, most of the works focus on the analysis of the normative framework, such as the Law on the Integration of Foreigners⁸, or Asylum⁹ and others, having

¹ UNHCR, *Ukraine situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan and Moldova country chapter, 2025–2026*, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/114599> (5.10.2025)

² Data for Impact, *Quality of Life Survey. Republic of Moldova, 2024*, https://www.data4impactproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Moldova-Quality-of-Life-Survey_SR-24-213-D4I_508c-1.pdf (10.10.2025)

³ REACH and UNHCR, *Moldova Socio-Economic Insights Survey (SEIS): Key Findings*, October 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/119303> (30.10.2025)

⁴ European Commission, *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027*, COM (2020) 758 final, CELEX: 52020DC0758, “Official Journal of the European Union”, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0758> (5.10.2025)

⁵ EPC&KBF, *Beyond the Common Basic Principles on integration*, Issue Paper No. 27, 2005, https://www.epc.eu/content/PDF/2005/EPC_Issue_Paper_27_Basic_Principles_on_Integration.pdf (5.10.2025)

⁶ Carol Namata, Eleni Hatzidimitriadou, Edyta Mccallum, *Integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe: A scoping review of interventions*, “Journal of International Migration and Integration”, Vol. 26, 2025, pp. 513–541, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-025-01244-2> (10.10.2025)

⁷ Jenny Phillimore, *From mere life to a good life: Shifting refugee integration policy from outcomes to capabilities*, “Refugee Survey Quarterly”, Vol. 43, No. 4, 2024, pp. 387–409, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdae014> (10.10.2025)

⁸ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, *On the integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova: Law No. 274 of 27-12-2011*, “Official Gazette”, No. 372–382, Art. 342

⁹ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, *On asylum in the Republic of Moldova: Law No. 270 of 18-12-2008*, “Official Gazette”, No. 53–54, Art. 145

limited capacities to explore in depth the social, cultural and psychological dimensions of the inclusion process. Also, assessments of the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms and their capacity to respond to the new realities generated by the refugee crisis in Ukraine, as well as the integration of foreigners, are often limited to reports by public institutions or international organisations.

Relevance and novelty of the study. In the context of the Republic of Moldova, this lack of research is accentuated by the absence of longitudinal studies, which would follow the evolution of social perceptions, the socio-economic impact of refugees, the dynamics of collaboration between local authorities, state institutions and civil society. We can explain it by the fact that our state has experienced for the first time an increased influx of displaced people and that, currently, more consolidated actions are needed to be able to describe the cause-effect dichotomy of the phenomenon. Also, there are not yet sufficient analyses to integrate the human security perspective into the assessment of the integration process, although this concept is essential for understanding the vulnerabilities, risks and opportunities generated by forced displacement.

At the same time, the vision of the national authorities is to integrate foreigners in stages, according to the Government of the Republic of Moldova, set out in the “National Program on Migration and Asylum for 2026-2030”¹. Thus, the Programme contributes directly to the implementation of General Objective 12 – Regulated migration flow for the benefit of the country and the migrant and General Objective 13 – Strengthened and adjusted asylum system. Therefore, the present study highlights the urgent need for applied and interdisciplinary research, which integrates the human security perspective with the evaluation of institutional mechanisms and the role of civil society in managing the process of integration of refugees in the Republic of Moldova.

This article represents the first analytical component of the SNIS-supported project “Camps and Camp-Like Settings in Urban Environments: Bridging Humanitarian and Development Activities”, focusing specifically on the political and legal dimensions of Moldova’s response to forced displacement. At this stage, the study is primarily grounded in an examination of the normative, institutional, and policy frameworks that shape the national approach to protection and integration under temporary protection. By situating the analysis within the conceptual lens of human security, the article seeks to clarify how Moldova’s evolving policy architecture aligns with international and European standards and how these frameworks configure the conditions for future integration strategies. The present contribution thus establishes the conceptual and analytical foundations for subsequent stages of the project, which will integrate community-level and socio-economic data currently being collected.

Research question. How do host communities and refugee groups interact in the Republic of Moldova to shape social cohesion and what role do local and central public authorities play in building social resilience in the context of ongoing forced migration?

Null hypothesis (H₀): The interaction between host communities and refugee groups in the Republic of Moldova does not have a significant impact on social cohesion, and local and central public authorities do not play a decisive role in strengthening social resilience in the context of forced migration. Alternative hypothesis (H₁): The interaction between host communities and refugee groups in the Republic of Moldova contributes significantly to shaping social cohesion, and local and central public authorities play a key role in

¹ Government of the Republic of Moldova, *National Programme on Migration and Asylum for the years 2026–2030*, Government Decision No. 727/2025

strengthening social resilience in the context of forced migration. Purpose of the research: The study aims to analyse the multidimensional implications of forced displacement in the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of human security with the integration of legal-institutional, socio-economic and community approaches, starting from the national response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis in the period 2022–2025.

Objectives - identification of the hierarchy and interaction between international, European and national legal instruments in the field of refugee protection, as well as the institutional architecture responsible for the implementation of policies on forcibly displaced persons in the Republic of Moldova. Analysis of recent legislative developments influenced by the European integration process and the refugee crisis in Ukraine, as well as exploring opportunities to harmonise national legislation with the EU asylum acquis. Highlighting the importance of sustainable inclusion policies and multi-stakeholder partnerships for the effective integration of refugees.

Structure of the study - the study is organized into five compartments structured to ensure an integrated analysis of the issue. The introductory section presents the general context of the research, the justification of the topic, the objectives, the methodology used and the relevance of the study in relation to current trends regarding international protection and human security. The first analytical compartment examines the normative and institutional framework. The developments of the national legal framework, its compatibility with European and international norms, the role of international organizations in the field of international protection, as well as the national institutional architecture are analysed.

The second analytical compartment explores the social, economic and community dimension of the integration process. The focus is on the importance of sustainable inclusion policies, integration practices applied in the Republic of Moldova, the involvement of international partners and the relevance of multi-stakeholder partnerships to ensure an efficient and sustainable process of refugee integration. The Discussions Department makes a critical synthesis of the results obtained, highlights the implementation difficulties, systemic vulnerabilities, but also the strategic opportunities identified. The findings of the normative analysis are compared with the observations of the socio-community analysis, with a focus on strengthening social cohesion and on the prospects of harmonizing national policies with European standards. The final conclusions formulate the main findings of the research and reveal the potential to transform the solidarity manifested into sustainable public policies, in line with the human security approach.

Methodology Applied

In the elaboration of the investigation, the specific “scoping review” approach was used, adapted to the particularities of the national context. We were guided by the methodological model proposed by Arksey and O'Malley¹, later consolidated by Levac et al.². The outline structures the research process in six essential steps: (1) clearly defining the research questions; (2) identification of relevant sources; (3) the criterial selection of materials; (4) organization and systematization of data; (5) aggregation, synthesis and critical interpretation of results; and (6) consulting experts or stakeholders, where relevant. Within this research, the stages of selection and analysis of materials focused on normative

¹ Hilary Arksey, Lisa O'Malley, *Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework*, “International Journal of Social Research Methodology”, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2005, pp. 19–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616> (10.10.2025)

² Danielle Levac, Heather Colquhoun, Kelly K. O'Brien, *Scoping studies: Advancing the methodology*, “Implementation Science”, Vol. 5, No. 1, Art. 69, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-5-69> (10.10.2025)

documents, government reports, studies published by international organizations (UNHCR, IOM, UNDP), analyses on public perceptions, as well as relevant academic papers.

Content analysis was used to identify recurring themes, structural constraints, legislative developments and dynamics of interaction between institutions, international partners and host communities. Therefore, the methodology applied in this study is part of the paradigm of qualitative research, combines content analysis, documentary analysis and triangulation of sources to examine in depth the developments of the normative, institutional and socio-community framework on refugee protection in the Republic of Moldova. To ensure the transparency and rigour of the methodological process, the principles of the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, extension for Scoping Reviews) checklist developed by Tricco et al.¹ have been applied. This approach allowed for clear documentation of the selection criteria, the process of filtering information and how the results were structured.

Methodological limits and boundaries: Methodologically, this article relies on a qualitative design centred on documentary and content analysis of legal acts, policy instruments, institutional reports, and academic literature relevant to human security and forced displacement. This approach is appropriate for capturing the political–institutional configuration of Moldova’s response; however, it also entails certain limitations. As the study reflects the initial phase of a broader research project, it does not yet incorporate empirical social data such as interviews, focus groups, or survey findings. These data are being collected in the subsequent stages of the SNIS project and will form the basis of a complementary article dedicated to community dynamics, lived experiences, and social implications of integration. Consequently, the present analysis should be interpreted as a conceptual and normative mapping that prepares the ground for a more comprehensive, mixed-method examination in future research.

Investigation Results

Governance of International Protection in the Republic of Moldova: Normative Framework, Institutions and Partners

The studies developed at the scientific conference “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”² formulated pressing issues regarding human rights and international protection, explored strategies for the integration of displaced persons from Ukraine, both from a theoretical and practical perspective. In this context, the researchers examine the national regulatory infrastructure of the investigated topic and conclude that it is largely aligned with international and European standards. The ratification of the main UN conventions and the transposition of EU directives have allowed the development of a coherent regulatory protection system in the Republic of Moldova³.

Thus, among the main international regulations transposed into national legislation are: **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** at Art. 14 guarantees the right of people

¹ Andrea C. Tricco et al., *PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and explanation*, “Annals of Internal Medicine”, Vol. 169, No. 7, 2018, pp. 467–473, <https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-0850> (10.10.2025)

² Svetlana Slusarenco (Coord.), *Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection*, National Scientific Conference with International Participation, April 10, 2025, Chisinau, CEP USM, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

³ Serghei Sprincean, Inga Grigoriu, Alexandru Guigov, *Protection of refugees in the Republic of Moldova: regulation, national institutions and local organizations*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, 2025, pp. 197–215, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

to apply for asylum and to benefit from asylum in other countries so as not to be persecuted; The Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees of 31 January 1967 concluded in New York, which establish a single universal definition of the term 'refugee', the key principles and rights of persons granted refugee status, and the responsibilities of asylum-granting States; Convention of 28 September 1954 relating to the Status of Stateless Persons adopted in New York, which establishes the rights and obligations of stateless persons, including access to education, employment and travel documents; The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to the SDGs establishes “ensuring legal, safe and orderly migration, which involves full respect for human rights and the application of humane treatment to migrants, regardless of their status, refugees and displaced persons”; The Global Compact for Safe, Regulated and Orderly Migration, as well as the objectives of the Global Compact for Refugees, which aim to promote international cooperation by defining guiding principles and providing a multilateral policy framework¹.

The regulations of the **European norms** have enriched the national legislation, bringing it closer to the requirements of the European community on refugees, so that the Republic of Moldova is governed by: the Charter of the European Union, art. 18 guarantees the right to asylum and establishes the obligations of the member states in the management of applications for international protection; Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for granting temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and measures to promote a balance between Member States' efforts to receive such persons and bearing the consequences of such reception; Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 lays down standards on the conditions that third-country nationals or stateless persons must fulfil in order to benefit from international protection, on a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and on the content of the protection granted; Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection; Council Regulation No. 539/2001/EC of 15 March 2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and the list of third countries whose nationals are exempt from that requirement and others².

The national normative framework is governed by: the Association Agreement with the European Union, including the provisions of Title III of the AA “Freedom, Security and Justice” subchapter “Cooperation in the field of migration, asylum and border management” (Art. 14); The Association Agenda 2021-2027, which establishes a robust legal framework for the protection of refugees that ensures that their rights are respected through a series of directives and regulations; National Accession Program and National Action Plan for the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union; Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Community on the facilitation of the issuance of visas and the Readmission Agreement (2007); Joint Declaration on the Moldova-EU Mobility Partnership (2008); Moldova-EU Dialogue on Visa Liberalization (2010). These norms are

¹ Serghei Sprincean, Inga Grigoriu, Alexandru Guigov, *International regulations and mechanisms for the protection of refugees in the Republic of Moldova*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, 2025, pp. 359–374, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

² *Ibidem*, p. 363

important documents that determine the path of the Republic of Moldova towards a broader integration into international structures specialized in the field of refugee protection¹.

National laws: Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Art. 19, 72; Law No. 275/1994 on the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the Republic of Moldova; Law No. 1024/2000 on the citizenship of the Republic of Moldova, art. 6, para. 3, art. 12, para. 2, lit. C, art. 17, para. 1; Law No. 677/2001 on the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the Convention on the Status of Refugees, as well as to the Protocol on the Status of Refugees; Law No. 270/2008 on asylum in the Republic of Moldova, which is a fundamental organic law that transposes essential EU directives on asylum such as Directive 2011/95/EU, Directive 2013/32/EU, Directive 2013/33/EU; Law No. 200/2010 on the regime of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova; Law No. 275/2011 on the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons; Law No. 274/2011 on the integration of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova; Law No. 257/2013 on third-country nationals who are required to hold a visa and third-country nationals who are exempt from the visa requirement when crossing the state border of the Republic of Moldova².

Over the past decade, the executive authorities of the Republic of Moldova have implemented a series of measures aimed at ensuring compliance with international and regional commitments on migration, asylum and integration of foreigners. A series of Government Decisions (GD) have facilitated the evolution from the established norms to the implementation into practice, such as: GD No. 493/2011 on the approval of the Regulation of the Temporary Placement Center for Foreigners; GD No. 553/2017 on the establishment of integration centers for foreigners, having as a benchmark the model of several EU member states such as Romania, Portugal, France, Austria, etc.; GD No. 947/2018 on the coordination of migration and asylum policies and better inter-institutional coordination; GD No. 658/2022 approved the Strategy for the development of the field of internal affairs for the years 2022-2030, which established the priority directions on border security, migration management and social integration of foreigners, as well as the needs to develop sustainable migration management mechanisms, taking into account regional and international trends; GD No. 808/2022 on the approval of the Program on the management of the migration flow, asylum and integration of foreigners for the years 2022-2025³.

A critical stage for the Republic of Moldova was the refugee crisis generated by the Russian Federation's military aggression in Ukraine. In this context, the authorities have adopted exceptional measures to ensure the protection of displaced persons, including through *GD No. 21/2023* on granting temporary protection to forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine, which regulated the granting of temporary protection to Ukrainian refugees, demonstrating the commitment of the Republic of Moldova to comply with international standards for the protection of refugees and to work closely with European partners in managing the crisis Humanitarian; GD No. 16/2023 on the organization and functioning of the General Inspectorate for Migration established the new framework for the organization and functioning of the Office for Migration and Asylum in order to streamline administrative

¹ Serghei Sprincean, Inga Grigoriu, Alexandru Guigov, *Protection of refugees in the Republic of Moldova: regulation, national institutions and local organizations*, "Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection", 2025, p. 199, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content>

² *Ibidem*, pp. 200-202

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 202-203

processes and ensure a more efficient management of migration in accordance with international requirements, but also with situations of increased influx of migrants¹.

National institutions²: The Government of the Republic of Moldova is the main institutional actor in the management of the migration flow with the responsibility to develop and implement national policies on migration, asylum and integration of displaced persons, acts through ministries and specialized agencies and coordinates international protection and humanitarian assistance measures, to ensure refugees' access to various services, such as education, health, housing, socio-economic integration, etc. The Government is also actively working with international organizations and external partners to strengthen the institutional capacity of the state in managing refugee flows and developing sustainable solutions for their integration into local communities.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of the Republic of Moldova, with a central role in the process of managing the flow of refugees, ensures security and public order, as well as the protection of the rights of displaced persons. Through the General Inspectorate for Migration (IGM), the Ministry of Interior coordinates asylum and temporary protection procedures, facilitates refugees' access to essential services and their integration into society. In collaboration with international organizations, such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Ministry of Internal Affairs is strengthening institutional capacities and implementing support measures for host and refugee communities.

The General Inspectorate for Migration (IGM) is the central authority responsible for implementing national policies in the areas of migration, asylum, statelessness and the integration of foreigners. The IGM manages the procedures for granting international protection, issues residence permits, coordinates social and cultural integration measures for foreigners, monitors compliance with the legislation on the regime of foreigners, collaborates with international organizations to ensure an effective management of migration processes. The IGM works with international organisations, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to ensure effective migration management, facilitate the integration of foreigners into local communities, ensure the provision of legal assistance, as well as access to essential services for people under protection.

The Border Police of the Republic of Moldova (PF) play a key role in managing the flow of refugees, ensuring security and order at the state borders. Since February 24, 2022, with the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova has recorded a significant influx of people who have crossed the border from Ukraine. Thus, more than 1.4 million people from Ukraine entered the Republic of Moldova, of which more than 120,000 remained in the country as refugees. PF collaborates intensively with international organizations, such as UNHCR on the dimension of technical assistance and logistical support on the capacity to manage the flow of people and ensuring quality services to those seeking international protection. The PF cooperates with FRONTEX, EUBAM and other international bodies to ensure effective border management and implement protection measures for refugees.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MMPS) has the role of supporting the socio-economic integration of refugees in the Republic of Moldova, being responsible for developing and implementing policies on refugees' access to social services, financial assistance, labour market integration and protection of vulnerable groups, ensuring their

¹ *Idem*, p. 203

² *Ibidem*, pp. 203-206

access to material aid, psychosocial counselling and employment support measures. MMPS works with international organizations and the private sector to develop sustainable solutions that support both refugees and host communities.

The Ministry of Education and Research (MEC) ensures the process of integration of refugee children into the educational system of the Republic of Moldova, provides linguistic and psycho-pedagogical support, including through the creation of classes taught in Ukrainian. MEC collaborates with international partners, such as the UN Refugee Agency and UNICEF Moldova. Thus, over 3,500 refugee children from Ukraine are enrolled in educational institutions in the Republic of Moldova and benefit from an inclusive educational environment adapted to their specific needs.

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Moldova (MoH) ensures refugees' access to medical services, implements measures to provide free healthcare to foreign refugee citizens, including health assessments at border crossing points and placement centres. At the same time, refugees can access primary health care services in the localities where they are accommodated. The Ministry of Health works with international organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the International Organization for Migration, to facilitate the integration of refugees into the health system and provide them with the necessary information on the services available.

The local public administration authorities provide support in the development of programs and the implementation of community projects to facilitate the active participation of foreigners in the social and cultural life of the community. Implements measures to increase the level of information of the local population regarding migration, asylum, social integration of foreigners, development of the spirit of tolerance and intercultural understanding. Identify accommodation possibilities for foreigners included in integration programs. They can create collaborative networks to facilitate the integration of foreigners, including by delegating and subcontracting certain specific activities to non-governmental organizations, etc. International partners¹: The European Union and its structures are a strategic partner and an essential pillar of support to the Republic of Moldova in managing the refugee crisis through financial assistance, logistical support, cooperation and integration policies, etc. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the main UN agency responsible for the protection and assistance of refugees globally, present in the Republic of Moldova since 1998, when a cooperation agreement was signed with national authorities to support refugees and asylum seekers.

The support provided by the Republic of Moldova to refugees stood out especially in the context of the humanitarian crisis generated by the conflict in Ukraine with the Honorable Mention within the Nansen Prize for Refugees, awarded by UNHCR in 2024. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is the UN agency dedicated to the reproductive health and rights of women and young people, improvements in health services and access to quality care for both the local population and refugees. UNFPA works with local authorities and other international agencies to effectively coordinate humanitarian assistance and promote social cohesion between refugees and host communities. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) started its activity in the Republic of Moldova in 2001, and in 2003, the country officially became a member state of the organization. IOM assists the authorities of the Republic of Moldova in the development and implementation of effective migration

¹ Serghei Sprincean, Inga Grigoriu, Alexandru Guigov, *International regulations and mechanisms for the protection of refugees in the Republic of Moldova*, "Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection", 2025, pp. 361–363, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

policies, protection of the rights of migrants and refugees, promotes their integration into local communities. In the context of the refugee crisis in Ukraine, IOM is providing humanitarian assistance, including resettlement, support and protection services for displaced persons.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has stepped up humanitarian assistance efforts for Ukrainian refugees by working intensively with national authorities and local organizations in the Republic of Moldova to provide material and logistical support and facilitate access to essential services. Thus, in 2023, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova ratified an agreement with the ICRC, giving it an official status and recognizing it as a diplomatic entity in the country. The ICRC works with the Ministry of Internal Affairs by assisting in managing refugee flows, humanitarian crises, supporting government structures and providing specialized training. The ICRC has partnered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to improve assistance to vulnerable people. HelpAge International is a global organization dedicated to protecting and improving the quality of life of older people, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups affected by humanitarian crises. In the Republic of Moldova, the organization collaborates with national and international authorities, takes actions to ensure that the specific needs of elderly refugees are recognized and included in support policies and national humanitarian assistance strategies.

Sustainable Inclusion Policies and Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation in the Process of Integration of Refugees in the Republic of Moldova from the Perspective of Human Security

At the EU level, the temporary protection regime was activated for the first time in March 2022 by Directive 2001/55/EC, which provided a unitary legal framework for granting temporary protection. Subsequently, the Republic of Moldova, through GD No. 21 of 18-01-2023, joined the member states of the European Union that have adopted emergency measures to protect the people affected by the conflict in Ukraine. The main characteristic of this regime is that it has a collective, immediate and time-limited character, being designed to guarantee rapid access to a minimum package of essential rights and services, without going through the asylum procedure, with the possibility of remaining legally on the territory of the Republic of Moldova for the entire duration of temporary protection¹.

Thus, forcibly displaced persons are granted unrestricted access to the labour market, without the need for an additional permit, as well as the right to emergency medical assistance as well as to basic social services. At the same time, the minor children of the beneficiaries have the right to be enrolled in public educational institutions, under conditions like those offered to Moldovan citizens. In addition to these rights, the state, together with international partners, ensures access to forms of material support, including temporary accommodation in placement centres, food, clothing and personal hygiene items. At the same time, there is a practical form of compliance with national legislation, as well as working with the competent authorities for registration, updating of personal data and renewal of documents, avoiding behaviour that could constitute a threat to public order or national security, all in order to maintain an effective humanitarian protection framework, in parallel with ensuring adequate institutional control and a climate of social cohesion in the crisis

¹ Alexandru Guigov, *Challenges of integrating beneficiaries of temporary protection into the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres*, "Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection", 2025, pp. 323-324, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

conditions¹. And to understand not only the scale of the humanitarian crisis, but also the institutional capacity of the Republic of Moldova to organize a rapid and functional emergency response, we will refer to the official data published by the General Inspectorate for Migration, until November 10, 2025. Thus, according to the IGM, 83,815 people were pre-registered for temporary protection, of which 63,961 were documented, including 19,443 minor children².

Another measure to support and integrate forcibly displaced persons from Ukraine are the Temporary Placement Centres for Refugees, coordinated at national level by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, in collaboration with local public authorities and international organizations, such as UNHCR, IOM³. The centres provide support with the provision of accommodation, food, healthcare and counselling for vulnerable groups. Access is based on temporary protection status, but limited capacity and insufficient resources generate difficulties such as overcrowding and lack of qualified personnel, issues highlighted in official reports⁴.

From the perspective of human security – a concept internationally established with the Human Development Report of 1994, elaborated by the United Nations Development Programme⁵ which, unlike the classic paradigm, centred on the defence of the national territory, human security proposes an integrated, multidimensional approach, which includes economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security, the protection of refugees in the Republic of Moldova is difficult to assess. One of the explanations is that national authorities, in collaboration with external partners, focus more on synthesizing statistical data, to the detriment of a practical assessment of the feeling of security and safety.

For example, the economic security component of refugees can be interpreted, to some extent, as integration into the labour market in the Republic of Moldova. According to data published by the National Employment Agency⁶ (ANOFM), until February 7, 2025, 1,626 Ukrainian citizens were employed in the Republic of Moldova: Women: 1,073, Men: 553. Geographical distribution: Chisinau: 1,252 people, Balti: 95 people, ATU Gagauzia: 60 people. Therefore, these data represent about 2.5% of the total documented by IGM. At the same time, training initiatives and partnerships between authorities, the private sector and international organisations outline the potential of a coordinated approach capable of transforming economic integration into a vector of sustainable inclusion.

In terms of personal and community security, the social integration of refugees into the Moldovan society as host community takes place in a context marked by regional inequalities and limited administrative capacities, as the Republic of Moldova itself faces a

¹ *Idem*, p. 324

² General Inspectorate for Migration, *International protection and documentation of Ukrainians in the Republic of Moldova. Temporary protection*, Records recorded on November 10, 2025, <https://igm.gov.md/protectia-internationala-si-documentarea-ucrainenilor-in-republica-moldova-56/> (10.11.2025)

³ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, *Order no. 21/2022 on the organization of temporary placement centers for refugee*, <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Regulamentul-de-organizare-%C8%99i-func%C8%9Bionare-a-Centrului-de-plasament-temporar-pentru-refugia%C8%9Bi.pdf> (20.10.2025)

⁴ Alexandru Guigov, *Challenges of integrating beneficiaries of temporary protection into the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, 2025, p. 326, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content>

⁵ UNDP, *Human Development Report. New Dimensions of Human Security*, “Oxford University Press”, 1994, <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr1994encompletenostats.pdf> (10.10.2025)

⁶ National Employment Agency (ANOFM), *Employment situation of Ukrainian citizens in the Republic of Moldova, February 7, 2025*, <https://anofm.md/news/angajarea-cetatenilor-ucraineni-2025> (10.10.2025)

series of systemic vulnerabilities that affect the quality of life of citizens. At the international level, in recent years, a new model based on adaptive social cohesion is emerging, which emphasizes the involvement of local communities in integration processes and the construction of social relationships between locals and newcomers¹. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the experience of integrating refugees is a relatively new one and was caused by the massive influx of refugees from Ukraine starting with February 2022². Thus, both the potential of community solidarity and the fragilities of the administrative system, including the regulatory framework, were tested. In this context, the human security of both groups – the host community and refugee groups – conditions social cohesion and should become a public policy objective, necessary to prevent social tensions, ensure stability and strengthen resilience at local level. A model that is proposed adapted to the conditions and realities of the Republic of Moldova is the European Social Model³, built based on a welfare state, which promotes the interdependence between economic and social progress. The model emphasizes the importance of social dialogue, social security and inclusion, it is used to describe the European experience of simultaneously promoting sustainable economic growth and social cohesion⁴.

The political security of refugees can be expressed through their political integration, which is conditional on the provisional nature of temporary protection, which does not confer electoral or formal representation rights. However, informal civic participation, through public consultations or community activities, could contribute to the development of an inclusive local governance framework. In the Republic of Moldova, such initiatives are still limited, although European examples demonstrate the positive impact of the consultative involvement of refugees on social stability⁵.

Discussions

The comparative analysis of the results obtained within the two previous compartments allows the authors of this study to formulate a perspective on the governance of international protection in the Republic of Moldova, by correlating it to the normative dimension with the socio-community one. Following the investigation, the study reveals that the Republic of Moldova has developed a coherent legal and institutional framework, largely compatible with European and international standards on refugee protection. The ratification of the main UN conventions, the transposition of European directives and the close collaboration with organizations such as UNHCR, ILO, ICRC, UNFPA, HelpAge International and others, is a strategic approach aimed at strengthening institutional capacities and improving assistance mechanisms. At the same time, the existence of a regulatory and institutional infrastructure cannot automatically guarantee the efficiency of implementation. It is necessary to examine whether there are still administrative shortcomings, what are the limited resources and what the impact would be if external support were considerably

¹ Inga Grigoriu, *The Imperative of Social Cohesion between Host Communities and Displaced Groups: Challenges and Solutions for the Republic of Moldova*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, 2025, p. 345, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

² *Ibidem*, p. 352

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 349-350

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 348-349

⁵ Alexandru Guigov, *Challenges of integrating beneficiaries of temporary protection into the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres*, “Current Challenges in Border Security and International Protection”, 2025, pp. 330-331, <https://msuir.usm.md/server/api/core/bitstreams/4001e91c-9901-4c97-879e-a805d3da49ff/content> (10.10.2025)

reduced. The limitations of this study did not allow us to expand in the analysis of the aforementioned challenges.

The findings of this initial phase highlight several implications for the development of more coherent and responsive public policies in the field of international protection and integration. Considering preliminary observations field, the analysis underscores the need for a structured monitoring and evaluation framework capable of capturing both institutional performance and the lived realities of displaced persons. At the same time, several dimensions that are essential for a comprehensive understanding of human security in displacement contexts cannot yet be incorporated into the analysis. These include refugees' perceptions of security, the dynamics of interaction between displaced persons and host communities, the functioning and adequacy of placement centres, psychosocial well-being, community-level tensions, concrete indicators of social inclusion, and on-the-ground assessments of institutional capacity. Each of these aspects depends on primary data currently being collected through interviews and other qualitative methods. As such, they will be examined empirically in subsequent stages of the SNIS project, which will complement the present normative and institutional analysis with an in-depth exploration of community experiences and local realities. This phased approach ensures that future outputs of the project integrate both structural perspectives and the human-centred insights necessary for designing context-sensitive and sustainable integration policies.

A clearer justification for the integration of the human security framework is essential, particularly given the multidimensional nature of displacement and the empirical patterns emerging from Moldova's response. Human security offers an analytical advantage by shifting the focus from state-centric protection mechanisms to the concrete conditions that shape people's safety, dignity, and well-being. This lens helps reinterpret data already available, for example, labour market participation as an indicator of economic security, access to placement centres as part of shelter and personal security, or cooperation between local authorities, NGOs, and international actors as a component of community and institutional security. While traditional legal and institutional analyses assess compliance with standards such as the EU Temporary Protection Directive or national emergency measures, the human security perspective exposes the extent to which these frameworks translate into meaningful protection in practice. It allows policymakers to evaluate not only the existence of rights, services, and procedures, but also their accessibility, adequacy, and lived impact on displaced persons and host communities.

Comparing the findings from the analysis of the regulatory framework with the observations resulting from the social and community dimension, based on Government Decision no. 21/2023 and, knowing the realities of the Republic of Moldova, a series of systemic vulnerabilities are emerging that could affect the coherence of the national response. We agree that the implementation of temporary protection measures represents a significant step towards harmonization with the practices of the European Union, but their application on the ground could be constrained by certain limited institutional capacities or other challenges related to effective multi-stakeholder coordination. For example, the Temporary Placement Centers, managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection together with international partners, provide basic assistance, but in some cases face overcrowding, shortage of qualified personnel and logistical difficulties. These shortcomings could affect the quality of services and the sense of security of refugees, which remains difficult to assess due to the lack of clear indicators on the perception of human security.

On the dimension of economic security, the data provided by ANOFM indicate a labour market integration rate of approximately 2.5% of all documented refugees, a modest

percentage that may suggest certain major structural barriers: lack of knowledge of the Romanian language, lack of recognition of professional qualifications and legal uncertainty associated with temporary protection. However, the training initiatives offered by ANOFM and the public-private partnerships supported by the ILO and UNHCR can provide prerequisites for sustainable economic integration. The authors believe that the socio-economic integration of refugees should be seen not only as a measure of inclusion, but also as a condition for social stability and with a certain impact on local development. We mention here the vision of the national authorities regarding the phased integration of foreign persons, including and with the aim of economic migration because of the constant loss of workforce.

At social and community level, the analysis reveals the importance of strengthening social cohesion between refugees and host communities. The Republic of Moldova, faced with its own economic and institutional vulnerabilities, is testing the limits of civic solidarity and the capacity of local administration to manage complex integration processes. In this context, the adoption of policies based on the European Social Model, centred on the balance between economic and social progress, on social dialogue and inclusion, could become a strategic direction for development.

Politically, the integration of refugees is still low, being limited to the informal consultative and civic dimension. European examples demonstrate that active participation contributes to the stability and resilience of communities, despite the lack of a formal participation framework that restricts the potential of their involvement in local decision-making processes.

Overall, the analysis confirms that the Republic of Moldova has made significant progress in strengthening the governance of international protection, but the implementation process remains marked by systemic challenges. An integrated approach, based on the principles of human security and multi-stakeholder cooperation, can be a catalyst for transforming reactive solidarity into a policy of sustainable inclusion. Future strategic directions should therefore aim at: multidimensional assessment of refugee security, professionalisation of the staff involved, strengthening local partnerships and promoting social cohesion as a foundation for stability and sustainable development.

Final Conclusions

The present study was developed within the national research project “010501 SENREMO -The National Security of the Republic of Moldova in the Context of European Union Accession: Legal, Political Science, and Sociological Approaches (2024–2027)”. Also, within the international research project entitled 'Camps and Camp-Like Settings in Urban Environments: Bridging Humanitarian and Development Activities', 2024-2026.”, supported by the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS). This investigation is the first component of the three thematic directions provided by the SNIS project, being dedicated to the political dimension of international protection and integration of refugees in the Republic of Moldova.

The purpose of the research of the present study is to examine the evolution and effectiveness of national governance mechanisms in the field of international protection, with a focus on their compatibility with European and international standards, as well as on the identification of emerging challenges and opportunities in the process of refugee integration. The specific objectives were analysis of the normative framework and institutional architecture, study of inter-institutional cooperation and exploration of the socio-economic

dimension of integration. These have been achieved through the application of qualitative research methods, in particular content analysis and literature review of relevant sources.

The applied methodology, based on the Arksey & O'Malley model improved by Levac et al. and guided by the PRISMA-ScR standards, allowed a rigorous structuring of the investigation process, from the formulation of research questions to the analysis of the collected data. This approach facilitated an understanding of the correlation of the normative framework with the achievements of the Republic of Moldova in the investigated topic.

As regards the hypotheses formulated, the analysis carried out does not allow, at the current stage, the validation of the null hypothesis (H_0): The interaction between host communities and refugee groups in the Republic of Moldova does not have a significant impact on social cohesion, and local and central public authorities do not play a decisive role in strengthening social resilience in the context of forced migration. The alternative hypothesis (H_1), according to the research, is valid: The interaction between host communities and refugee groups in the Republic of Moldova contributes significantly to shaping social cohesion, and local and central public authorities play an essential role in strengthening social resilience in the context of forced migration.

As current research has focused predominantly on the regulatory and institutional framework, validating these assumptions requires in-depth empirical studies that explicitly integrate the human security dimension and safety perception indicators, especially at the level of local communities.

The Discussions Department highlighted several future directions for research, including: the need for multidimensional assessment of refugee security, deepening studies on the socio-economic impact of temporary protection, investigating the role of local public administration in strengthening social cohesion and exploring European models of inclusion adaptable to the Moldovan context. At the same time, the importance of an intersectoral approach was underlined, combining the legal, social and human perspective, and placing the concept of human security at the centre of public policies on forced migration.

The present study provides a solid conceptual and methodological basis for further research within the SNIS project, which will contribute to the scientific substantiation of public policy decisions aimed at ensuring the protection, integration and well-being of refugees, in parallel with strengthening the resilience and cohesion of the Moldovan society.

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