

# GAGAUZIA DIALOGUE

CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE GAGAUZIA AUTONOMY WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.

## DIALOGUE PROCESS CONTINUES, ENGAGING POLITICAL EXECUTIVE, MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY



In the second half of 2018, the Gagauzia Parliamentary Dialogue project continued its work with a renewed focus on analyzing the mechanisms governing the relationship between Chisinau and Comrat, and broadening engagement with stakeholders of the dialogue process, including Executive representatives from Chisinau and Comrat, members of the national and Gagauz media, Civil Society, and international donors like UNDP and UN Women.

In November, the project organized a study trip to the European autonomy of South Tyrol in Italy for representatives from central Ministries and members of the autonomy's Executive Committee. The group gained substantive insights on centre-autonomy relations to further inform the ongoing dialogue process, and strengthened interpersonal relationships between representatives from Chisinau and Comrat.

In December, the consultation on the ongoing mapping and analysis of institutional and procedural mechanisms governing the relationships between Chisinau and Comrat was expanded to include key Civil Society Organizations. This feedback will be incorporated into the final analysis, to be published in 2019, and used to inform the ongoing parliamentary dialogue process.

The project also coordinated a visit to Comrat for members of the national and Gagauz media, to strengthen knowledge about the dialogue process and build relationships with key stakeholders in the autonomy.

The Gagauzia Parliamentary Dialogue will resume following the election period, and continue to work on the joint vision and roadmap for the dialogue process developed by the Gagauzia Working Group in 2018.

## REPORT SUMMARIZES DIALOGUE IMPACT 2015-2018

A new report, 'Gagauzia Parliamentary Dialogue 2015-2018' was published in November, summarizing the key results and impact of three years of sustained dialogue between Chisinau and Comrat. The report is available in Romanian, Russian and English from the project's online platform [gagauziadialogue.md](http://gagauziadialogue.md).

The report is a key deliverable from the project's communications strategy, and will contribute to increased transparency surrounding the dialogue process by providing parliamentarians, international donors, civil society and other interested parties with a clear overview of the objectives and impact of the Gagauzia Dialogue Project to date.



# EXECUTIVE REPRESENTATIVES RESEARCH EUROPEAN AUTONOMY FUNCTION

On 11-16 November 2018, Executive representatives from Chisinau and Comrat travelled to the European autonomy of South Tyrol, Italy, to discover information and insights with the potential to advance the ongoing dialogue between Chisinau and Comrat.

With the support of experts from the EURAC Research centre based in South Tyrol, the group examined how the mechanisms that govern the autonomy's relations with the centre function, and reviewed the process of delineating and implementing the autonomy's competences in the sectors of culture, education, economy and regional development.

The trip provided an opportunity for representatives from both Executives to express and discuss shared problems, challenges and opportunities in a neutral



environment. Dedicated debriefing sessions added context to lessons learned, and participants from Chisinau and Comrat welcomed the opportunity to build relationships between counterparts.

Improving institutional mechanisms to facilitate a more systematic approach to clarifying Gagauzia's competences

and improving effective cooperation between institutions in Chisinau and Comrat are key priorities of the Gagauzia Working Group.

The trip to South Tyrol was organized to support these objectives, and is part of the project's long term strategy to broaden engagement to Executive level actors in Chisinau and Comrat.

## COOPERATION WITH UNDP HIGHLIGHTED AT INFORMAL DIALOGUE MEETING

Members of the Gagauzia Dialogue process met for the final informal dialogue meeting of 2018 on 27th November. The meeting included a presentation from the Sweden-funded UNDP project "Strengthening Parliamentary Governance in Moldova" about its work towards developing the capacities of the Gagauz People's Assembly (GPA). This direction is complementary to the work of the Gagauzia Dialogue Project.

Femke Lee-Brouwer, Chief Technical Advisor for SPGM, spoke about the project's objective of working with the GPA to strengthen its capacity to draft and implement policy, key for both the functioning of the autonomy itself

and for a sustainable dialogue between Chisinau and Comrat.

This presentation represents another step in the synergistic cooperation of the Gagauzia Dialogue Project with other donor-led projects working on questions related to the functioning of the autonomy, and provided interested parties from Chisinau with a clear overview of the capacity building activities underway in Comrat.

Swedish Ambassador Anna Lyberg also spoke at the dialogue meeting, stressing the importance of continued dialogue and Sweden's support for the future of the dialogue process.

Members of the Gagauzia Working Group then provided feedback on the project's work mapping the institutional and procedural mechanisms that govern relations between Chisinau and Comrat. This work, which results from a decision of the Gagauzia Working Group in 2018, will inform future decisions on how these mechanisms can be improved to facilitate more effective Chisinau-Comrat relations.

The formal and informal sessions of the Gagauzia Parliamentary Dialogue Process will resume following the election period, in line with the joint vision and roadmap for the dialogue process laid out by the Working Group in 2018.



# CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTED ON PROCESS MAPPING CENTER-AUTONOMY RELATIONS

A key focus of the Gagauzia Dialogue Project is to improve existing institutional and procedural mechanisms facilitating Chisinau-Comrat relationships, and potentially develop a permanent platform able to act as an effective dispute resolution mechanism.

Reflecting this, the project's Legal Working Group has worked with CMI experts to conduct an extensive research project to map and analyze the institutional mechanisms and procedures currently managing centre-autonomy relations. The outcomes of this project will create a valuable baseline reference for future dialogue.

On December 5, 2018, the preliminary findings of this mapping process were presented to representatives from key Moldovan and Gagauz Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), followed by a discussion. This stakeholder input will be incorporated into the final mapping report, which will be published in 2019.

Engaging with local actors and stakeholders is a priority for both



CMI and the project funder, Sweden, and this event marks key step in engaging civil society with the activities of the dialogue process and associated working groups.

These consultations have proved to be a vital forum to consider and analyze specific issues concerning the institutional set-up of the autonomy, and for broader reflections on the functioning of the autonomy and its arrangements within the wider political, legal and administrative context, based on first hand experiences from CSOs. They have also served as a channel for

awareness raising among civil society actors about the dialogue process and potential pathways to engage with and support its activities; and generated suggestions from civil society actors for how to advance the dialogue towards effective progress.

In the next phase of the Gagauzia Dialogue Project, each new stage of the dialogue process will include closer consultation with Moldovan and Gagauz Civil Society, to work towards an inclusive search for solutions for the better functioning and management of the Gagauz autonomy.

## MEDIA FROM CHISINAU AND COMRAT BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL ON FACT FINDING VISIT

On November 29, the project organized an informational visit to Gagauzia for media representatives from Chisinau and Comrat, where they attended a meeting with Governor of Gagauzia and the President of the People's Assembly, and met with key representatives from the Gagauz executive.

The group also visited examples of recent economic development within the autonomy, including the new road at Avdarma built following the establishment of the Gagauz Agency for Regional Development and redistribution of the National Road Fund.

Journalists and the media are a crucial link between political processes, the population and civil society. The project coordinated the visit to enhance journalists' access to information about the autonomy, and increase their understanding about the political dialogue between Chisinau and Comrat.

The visit also began to build networks between media representatives in Chisinau and Comrat, and familiarized journalists with experts and political leaders from Gagauzia who they can contact for firsthand information.

During the event, media representatives visited the headquarters of the People's Assembly in Comrat. Irina Vlah, Governor of Gagauzia and Vladimir Kyssa, President of the People's Assembly spoke to the group about the major changes that have occurred within the Autonomy during the 3 years of parliamentary dialogue, and highlighted the importance of the communication process for building confidence between stakeholders.

They also underlined their appreciation for the CMI and for Sweden's support for the dialogue process and resulting social-economic progress within the autonomy, and expressed a wish for the dialogue to continue following the results of the Parliamentary elections.



# POLITICIANS, DONORS AND CIVIL SOCIETY DISCUSS GENDER INCLUSION IN POLITICS

On December 13, representatives from Chisinau and Comrat, Civil Society, and International Donors met for an event to discuss Women's Participation in Political Dialogue, organized by the Gagauzia Dialogue Project in partnership with UN Women in Moldova, and with moderation from CMI's Senior Manager for Women in Peacemaking, Johanna Poutanen.

The event reflected on current trends, opportunities and barriers regarding women's participation in politics in Moldova, with a focus on Gagauzia, and included presentations from UN Women Moldova, and Vesta, a regional

women's association located in Gagauzia. Attendees shared their experiences of being women in the Moldovan political environment, including the Governor of Gagauzia, Irina Vlah.

The Gagauz context was further elaborated by the CMI Gender Expert, who presented the recently finalized Gagauzia Gender Equality Profile, developed at the request of female members of the Gagauzia Working Group.

Discussion reflected on lessons learned, explored the role of women in political

dialogue at the Gagauz, Moldovan and International level, and drew conclusions about how stakeholders can work together to promote increased participation of women and improve gender mainstreaming in political processes in Moldova.

Gender inclusion and gender mainstreaming in political processes are key priorities for both CMI and Sweden, priorities which are shared by the Gagauzia Working Group as set out in the Group's Roadmap for the next phase of the dialogue process.



## ABOUT THE GAGAUZIA PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE PROJECT

The project "Supporting the Efficient Exercise of Gagauzia's Autonomous Powers within Moldova's Constitutional Framework" is delivered by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and funded by Sweden. The first phase of the project began in July 2015.

The project brings together legislators from Chisinau and Comrat in both formal and informal parliamentary dialogue to find joint solutions to common issues involving the autonomy.

Over the course of over 600+ Stakeholder Meetings, 26 Informal Dialogue Meetings and 15 Official Working Group Meetings, the

Gagauzia Working Group has issued 56 joint decisions between legislators from Chisinau and Comrat, including proposals to amend 11 national laws; developed a pilot program to map National and Gagauz Legislation; and created a joint vision and roadmap for the future of the dialogue process.

The Moldovan Government and Parliament have drawn on the decisions of the Gagauzia Working Group to create the first Action Plan on Socio-economic Development of Gagauzia and a Gagauz Agency for Regional Development, and have passed four cultural laws which include amendments proposed by the group.

**Sweden** has a long-term commitment for continued support to Eastern Partnership countries through its Results Strategy 2014-2020. Key priorities include strengthened democracy, respect for human rights, a more fully developed state under the rule of law, and gender inclusion.

**CMI** is an independent Finnish organization that works to prevent and resolve conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation. Nobel Peace laureate and former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari founded CMI in 2000. Since then, the organization has grown to become one of the leaders in its field.



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