

## **APE Activity Report** *Reporting period January – December 2020*

### **1. Implementation of projects and achievement of planned objectives**

During the current reporting period, Foreign Policy Association is implementing three core projects, with the support of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation a program of the German Marshall Fund (BST/GMF), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and the European Union (EU).

#### **APE has focused its main activities on the following priorities:**

- Promoting European association agenda of the Republic of Moldova;
- Monitoring the Transnistrian settlement process during the pandemic crisis and strengthening Moldova's security sector;
- Monitoring the Presidential elections, from November 2020;
- Promoting human rights values focusing on antidiscrimination and the gender aspect;
- Developing APE Think-Tank capacities.

#### **1.1. Project: “Grass roots Civil Society Development Facility in the Republic of Moldova (2019-2021)”/ EU, KAS**

The project aims to contribute to the development of civic engagement and of grass roots civil society from different Moldovan regions actively involved in policy and decision making which promotes and monitors transparency and accountability of public institutions, including in the implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement. The project is implemented in partnership with the other three NGOs, namely, ADEPT, Expert- Group and Pro-Europa Centre from Comrat, under the coordination of a core project team, and is financially supported by the European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. The total amount of the project is 3 mln EURO. Each of the partners involved are responsible for one of the Moldovan development regions. In particular, Foreign Policy Association is coordinating project activities in the Central part of the Republic of Moldova.

During the reporting period, APE undertook the following activities:

- Mentorship and guidance for 17 subgrantees civil society organizations (CSO) from 1<sup>st</sup> call, in the Center region of Moldova.
- Providing assistance in financial and narrative reporting, as well administrative support in project implementation of the beneficiaries in pandemic time.
- Participating along with Project Office (PO) and grant partners in common meetings and discussions on further grant program implementation, in particular, taking into account the pandemic outbreak.
- Conducted along with PO and grant program partners one [info session in online format](#) (zoom platform) within the 2<sup>nd</sup> call for local and regional CSOs from all Moldova's regions.
- Assessment of submitted project proposals and participating in final evaluation board meetings.

- Received [158 applications, 35 CSOs](#) accepted to benefit from the grant program.
- Organized online info sessions for second call beneficiaries aiming to guide and support on financial, narrative, administrative and visibility aspects in accordance with donors' requirements.
- APE team project is currently coordinating 12 subgrantees from the 2<sup>nd</sup> call, and 2 beneficiaries from the 1<sup>st</sup> call.
- For the upcoming period must be conducted together with PO and partners: final networking forum of CSOs, narrative and financial report and final evaluation grant program.

### **1.2 Project: “European integration and Foreign Policy Dialogues / Annual Moldovan European Integration Debate Forum”/FES**

The project was implemented with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova. Its main goal is to bring Moldovan foreign policy issues closer to the citizens of Moldova, by making information more accessible to them. Therefore, APE has institutionalized a permanent informational and debating platform on European integration and foreign policy issues that gives space and explores the relevant and competent opinions of the officials, politicians, businessmen, diplomats, local and international experts. The main beneficiaries of the project were Moldovan NGOs, journalists, foreign policy experts, international relations professors, political parties, politicians, parliamentarians, governmental officials, diplomats and of course ordinary people.

During the reporting period, APE undertook the following activities:

- The [7<sup>th</sup> Annual Moldovan European Integration Debate Forum. Towards a European Future for Moldova](#) was organized together with Chisinau Office FES team and took place on December 8, 2020, in both online and offline formats following all necessary pandemic procedures and measures. This edition addressed traditionally topics such as the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU, regional relations, the issue of regional security, the implementation of justice system reform, fight against corruption and freedom of expression.
- The Forum consisted of 3 main Panels namely: [Panel I](#) Relaunching the European integration agenda of the Republic of Moldova: main challenges and prospects; [Panel II](#) Justice system reform: judicial integrity, quo vadis? [Panel III](#) Reinforcing security dimension of the Eastern Partnership.
- Developed 12 newsletters “Synthesis and Foreign Policy Debates”, together with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Moldova. The electronic newsletters were developed based on the radio programs interviews with political analysts, politicians, decision-makers, representatives of the ruling parties and the opposition and distributed electronically to more than 1000 recipients.

### **1.3 Moldova reality check – Study visit to Moldova for the US and European experts, journalists, and public officials/ BST/GMF**

The project initially was designed to organize a reality check study visit in Moldova for a group of 12 US and European experts, journalists, and public officials, to assess Moldova's domestic and foreign policy challenges in context of the November presidential elections. Due to the pandemic restrictions, all planned meetings have been held in online format.

In result, APE conducted six webinars (October 26<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>) with the participation of 35 experts, journalists and officials from the EU, USA, Romania, Ukraine and Moldova. And one of the webinars (November 26<sup>th</sup>) was dedicated to the post-electoral prospects with the [participation of the new elected Moldovan President, Maia Sandu](#). The main subjects addressed were the snap parliamentary elections perspectives, the Moldova's relations with Romania, Ukraine, the EU and its member states, with the US, Russia Federation, as well the Transnistrian settlement conflict and issue of regional security including the role of diaspora and national minorities in the electoral processes.

For the following period APE will be responsible for drafting, publishing and presenting four policy briefs assessing the current Moldovan national security and foreign policy challenges and perspectives.

## 2. APE research activity

During the reporting period, APE has undertaken the following activities in accordance with its objectives:

- Published **12 monthly foreign policy newsletter** were distributed electronically to over 1000 subscribers comprising the representatives of all target groups;
- Published over **10 analyses and studies** on Moldova's European agenda, Eastern Partnership beyond 2020, media literacy and legal framework, disinformation resilience in the pandemic crisis, Transnistrian conflict in the context of the regional security developments, and international relations (Annex 1);
- Recorded and published over **40 interviews and commentaries** with APE experts and members (Annex 1);
- Participated in over **20 national and international conferences, round tables and debates**, a part of them were conducted in online format due to the pandemic risks, and two of them took place in Vienna, Austria, and Bucharest, Romania (Annex 1);
- Drafted and published **10 monthly issues** related to the Moldova's economic, domestic and foreign policy review for the online digest 'Eastern Partnership Think Bridge', a regional project lead by the Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism" (Annex 1);
- Maintained and updated regularly **APE website [www.ape.md](http://www.ape.md)**, which contains APE studies, publications and commentaries, as well as ads and press releases on events organized by the Association;
- Updating **APE Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ape.md>)**, where APE experts post their policy papers, studies, interviews, projects and jobs announcements, press releases, as well as photos from events that have already taken place.

## 3. Financial sustainability/fundraising/income generating activities

During the reporting period, APE has succeeded to extend its cooperation with donors, such as: the German Marshal Fund of the United States/Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Moldova office. In addition, APE developed good cooperation with the European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. In 2020, APE has applied 5 new projects to National Endowment for Democracy, BST/GMF and Cech Embassy project calls. And two of them were accepted to be funded both by the BST/GMF. In particular, the extension of the project related to

the Moldova study visit for 12 US and EU experts, journalists and officials and drafting policy papers on Moldova's national security and foreign policy. And a new project is going to be implemented along with the Romanian Center of European Policies (CRPE) related to the contribution of civil society development of the strategic partnership between Romania and Moldova.

#### **4. Future plans and challenges**

During the next period, APE will continue to focus its activity on the following key objectives:

##### **1. Supporting European Integration of the Republic of Moldova:**

- Assisting governmental institutions in achieving Moldova's European integration goals through constructive monitoring, expertise input and project partnerships (focus on the cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Interiors, Ministry of Defence and other relevant state institutions etc.);
- Organize 1 networking CSOs forum within the project aimed to develop Moldovan local grass-roots, financed by the EU and KAS; conducting mentoring and coaching session for sub-grantees in the Central region;
- Continue issuing the local Newsletter Synthesis of Foreign Policy;
- Conduct research on EU and its member states – Moldova relations, Eastern Partnership;
- Conduct research on Eastern Partnership format of cooperation and further developments for EaP countries in particular for Moldova;
- Increasing the awareness of Moldovan society on the European integration domestic and external challenges through constant and unbiased information on the way reform agenda agreed with the EU is implemented;
- Initiate a new format of discussions and debates on Moldovan European integration, security and foreign policy;
- Provide monthly comments and analysis on domestic and external events in the field of foreign policy, security and European affairs both in Romanian and Russian;
- Develop a project that aims to bring together Moldovan, Ukrainian and Romanian CSOs (involved in activities that support the European integration or in the monitoring of the integration process, challenges that both the EU and Moldova and Ukraine face regarding the implementation of the association agreement, political and security challenges in the neighborhood) for an exchange of good practices, expertise in the, as well as to offer mutual help for the development of skills and tools to lobby the implementation of the association agreement;

##### **2. Facilitate the Transnistrian conflict settlement:**

- Promoting confidence building between the Republic of Moldova and its Transnistrian separatist region at all levels: civil society, business community, local administrations;
- Facilitating political settlement through joint analytical and research inputs;
- Increasing the role of civil society in promoting confidence building measures in the areas of "frozen conflicts" of the Eastern Partnership.

##### **3. Strengthening the role of the Law enforcement agencies in Security Sector Reform:**

- Raise the awareness of the authorities and journalists about their role in promoting and implementing the security sector reform as part of the good governance process;
  - Increase authorities' understanding on the need to better communicate and cooperate in accordance with the Association Agenda and National security interests;
  - Provide a continuous platform for discussing the national security agenda and increase the awareness on the public on topics related to national, regional and international security.
  - Create a network of security experts;
  - Issue the third issue of the Newsletter on security sector reform monitoring;
  - Enhance the capacities of the gender aspect in security relate topics in the framework of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.
4. Strengthening the APE staff skills and capabilities as well as institutional communication and advocacy procedures:
- Improving the APE communication strategy with a focus on national and international outreach; elaborate a new communication strategy in accordance with the existing emerging trends and challenges;
  - Enhancing the analytical and advocacy skills as well as research methodology in order to provide qualified policy recommendations. Training on: strategic communication, advocacy and fundraising, research methods (qualitative and quantitative) and design, policy analysis, policy memo/briefs writing; (e.g. complete online courses on Coursera/Udemy);
  - Initiate an internal governance audit and a financial audit;
  - Initiate a process of rebranding and elaborating a public relations strategy;
  - Extend the area of research on regional level.

In order to achieve the abovementioned, APE will undertake the following actions in the coming year, 2021:

- Publish at least 8 Policy Briefs on Moldova's European association challenges and perspectives, Transnistrian Confidence Building processes, Information resilience, Security Sector Reform, Human rights and gender aspects, Resilience building, cooperation between Moldova and USA, EU, Russia Federation, Romania, Ukraine etc;
- Launching a new format of analytical public debates "APE Live: European Integration, Security and Foreign Policy Debates" through Zoom platform, live streaming on APE Facebook page and published on APE web page;
- Organize together with FES the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Moldovan European Integration Debate Forum, Chisinau, 2021;
- Organize up to 5 public debates on foreign policy and security topics (relations of the Republic of Moldova with its main strategic partners, assessing the Moldova's foreign and security policy beyond 2020, hybrid threats and information state resilience, perspectives of Moldova's European integration after EaP Summit);
- Organize at least 6 public discussions regarding the Euro-Atlantic cooperation with academia environment (students, professors) throughout Republic of Moldova;
- Issue 2 newsletters on the Security Sector Reform process of the Republic of Moldova.

- Undertake trainings on research methodology and advocacy as well as improve the communication strategy and outreach.

The key challenges for the next period would be to:

1. Lack of human and financial resources in order to extend the research area and increase the capacity of APE team. APE intends to identify new talented associate researchers, experts and to focus on elaborating impact project proposals;
2. Eventually internal political developments could impede the partnerships with major public institutions. APE will continue to maintaining its unbiased position towards cooperation with all state institutions and high officials at all levels.
3. APE will undertake all necessary measures according to its objectives aiming to face the new realities and challenges.