Understanding Social Tensions in Moldova

A household survey

2024

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

The war of Russia against Ukraine has had a significant impact on Moldova, resulting in serious humanitarian, energy and security challenges.[1] Consequent surge in food and energy prices increased the cost of living in Moldova.[2] In addition, perceived and/or real threats to its national security emanating from the left bank of the Nistru river and the fear of separatist movements in other parts of the country, especially in the initial months of the invasion, has added to a growing sense of insecurity.[3] Russia's aggression has also amplified political divisions in Moldova, primarily leveraged through pro-Russian political actors.[4]

Despite a history of geopolitical divisions,[5] Moldova has made significant strides towards European integration in recent years, including electing the pro-western Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) in 2021 and submitting an application for EU membership in 2022. At the same time, geopolitical polarisation in the country persists, with almost a third of the population (31.6%) in 2023 not supporting the accession process and 40.4% believing that Russia helped Moldova in strengthening its security and defence capabilities.[6]

The arrival of an estimated 123,000 Ukrainians (as of September 8, 2024[7]) made Moldova a country with the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe.[8] This unprecedented influx has put heavy pressures on both the Moldovan society and the government of Moldova. While the help of external partners, actions of authorities and voluntary involvement of ordinary citizens alleviated the refugee crisis, a concerning trend has emerged in the form of rising tensions between refugees and the local population. These tensions primarily stem from the impoverishment of the host population, compounded by perceptions of an unequal distribution of available assistance, which are often manipulated by political actors.[9] Altogether, these factors contributed to the increase and maintenance of existing divisions and adversarial tendencies in the Moldovan society. Against this challenging backdrop, monitoring the dynamics of social tensions and finding pathways to alleviate them becomes crucial. These two objectives led to the development of the Social Tensions Monitoring Mechanism (STMM), a collection of research tools aimed at spotting contentious and anti-systemic potential in a society, as well as identifying entry points to mitigate it.

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[1] Moldova: Nations in Transit 2023 Country Report. Freedom House (2023). https://freedomhouse.org/country/moldova/nations-transit/2023. Accessed 10 Aug. 2024.

[2] Socio-economic impact on the Moldovan economy since the war in Ukraine. Norwegian Refugee Council (2023). https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/socio-economic-impact-on-the-moldovan-economy/desk-review.pdf. Accessed 11 Aug. 2024.

[3] BTI 2024 Moldova Country Report. BTI (2024). https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/MDA#pos9. Accessed 11 Aug. 2024.

[4] BTI 2024 Moldova Country Report. BTI (2024). https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/MDA#pos9. Accessed 13 Aug. 2024

[5] Moldova at Crossroads. SeeD (2023). https://api.scoreforpeace.org/storage/pdfs/REP_Moldova22_Moldova-At-aCrossroads_POST-DESIGN_Package.pdf. Accessed 11 Aug. 2024.

[6] Public opinion survey "Perception of the citizens regarding Moldova's European integration process." IPRE & CBS-AXA (2023). https://ipre.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Public-opinion-poll_EU_Moldova_IPRE-CBS-AXA-11.07.2023_EN_fin.pdf. Accessed 14 Aug. 2024.

[7] Ukraine refugee situation: Republic of Moldova. UNHCR. https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location/10784. Accessed 15 Aug. 2024.

[8] Key findings of the 2023 Report on the Republic of Moldova. European Commission (2023). https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_23_5629. Accessed 13 Aug. 2024.

1.1 About STIMM

This report presents findings from a household survey, which, alongside expert community scoring and digital media monitoring, constitutes the three components of the Social Tensions Monitoring Mechanism (STMM). STMM is an innovative research tool developed by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) with funding from UNDP Moldova. It uses a carefully designed conceptual framework to identify current and potential tensions and other societal challenges pertaining to the country as a whole or to its specific regions and demographic groups.[10] The STMM framework is tailored to the Moldovan context and measures potential tensions and contentious behaviour at various dimensions and with varying degrees of granularity. While all three components of the STMM framework provide evidence to identify current or potential tensions and contentious behaviour, they do so at different levels. The household survey findings, summarised in the present report explore the perceptional aspects of social tensions, while the expert assessment, presented in another document – Understanding Social Tensions in Moldova: An Expert Assessment of Community Dynamics – investigates the more objective conditions of these tensions. For better comprehension, SeeD recommends that the two documents are read sequentially, starting with the household survey report.The third component, the media monitoring, is currently under development as of the publication of this report.

The household survey measures societal chasms and challenges at different levels, including identities and intergroup relations, relative deprivation and grievances, perceptions of social tensions, potential for contentious political action, confidence in institutions, support for reforms and policies, and geopolitical orientations. These elements were chosen to reflect key social dynamics in Moldova. For example, **Identities** are included because strong group affiliations have a potential to lead to ingroup/outgroup dynamics, fostering negative comparisons and heightened divisions. Likewise, **Intergroup relations** are critical, as they show how different groups interact and perceive one another, further shaping the overall social landscape. **Relative deprivation and grievances** highlight the disparities individuals perceive between their own circumstances and those of others, fuelling feelings of injustice and resentment that can lead to violent mobilisation. Furthermore, **Potential for contentious political action** examines the willingness of individuals or social groups to engage in various forms of activism to address their grievances, including through use of violence. Additionally, **Confidence in institutions and support for reforms** play a vital role in moderating social tensions; namely, high trust can mitigate existing grievances and foster collaboration, while low confidence can exacerbate tensions, increasing the potential for societal chasms. Furthermore, the issue of **Geopolitical orientations** is particularly relevant in Moldova's context, as it significantly impacts public sentiment and societal unity. Finally, **Perceptions of social tensions** – or how individuals themselves recognize and interpret the presence of societal divides – is an important element in understanding the potential for actual manifestations of social tensions.

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[9] Risks to community cohesion between Ukrainian refugees and host communities — Regional report. IFES (2023). https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Chapter%204.pdf. Accessed 12 Sep. 2024.

[10] Results of the expert community scoring can be accessed by clicking on the following link: https://bit.ly/ECoST2023

1.2 Survey methodology

Data for the household survey was collected through face-to-face interviews by CBS Research, a Chisinau-based polling company. The fieldwork took place between December 2023 and January 2024 and covered the Republic of Moldova (excluding left bank), with a final sample of 1,684 respondents.[11] The data was weighted by age, gender and group of raions to ensure that it proportionally and accurately reflects the demographic structure of the country.

The findings of the household survey are presented as scores ranging from 0 to 10. A score of 0 indicates that the phenomenon being measured is not observed at all, while a score of 10 signifies that it is strongly and prevalently observed. For example, in the case of Perceived social tensions, one of the indicators of the STMM framework, a score of 0 means that no one in the society anywhere feels the presence of tensions, whereas a score of 10 indicates that every individual everywhere perceives tensions in the society.

When corresponding data is available, comparisons are made with the 2022 iteration of the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index in Moldova, a quantitative study of attitudes and perceptions implemented in partnership with the Moldova Resilience Initiative and UNDP Moldova.

The present report is divided into three chapters. The following chapter will outline the key findings, followed by detailed analysis categorised by various dimensions. It will then present the conclusions drawn from the analysis. Finally, a glossary will be provided to clarify key terms used throughout the report, followed by the how to read mean scores section.

For more information on the household survey results, we recommend visiting SeeD's data platform — https://app.scoreforpeace.org/en/moldova/stmm/2023/1/map?row=tn-2-0

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[11]   The margin of error at the national level: ±2.3%.

2. Key findings

General

- While ethnic background emerges as an important identity marker for respondents, it is not necessarily viewed as a polarising factor for intergroup relations. Conversely, even though political affiliations are considered the least important for individual self-perception, they emerge as the most divisive factor in the context of intergroup relations. Thus, polarisation in Moldova appears to be primarily politically driven.

- Respondents are least affectionate to Romanian unionists (5.1), Ukrainian refugees (5.5), people who support different political parties (5.7) and Gagauzians (5.9). Conversely, they are most affectionate towards Romanian speakers (7.6), supporters of the Moldovan Orthodox Church (7.5) and proponents of Moldovan statehood (7.2). Most groups, however, fall in the mid-point range, suggesting that there are no strong extremes in intergroup feelings.

- Dissatisfaction related to Moldova's geopolitical direction is the most prominent grievance (6.1), while those related to the freedom of expression are reported the least (3.6), highlighting a relatively healthy state of political security in Moldova.

- Corruption (53%), impoverishment (48%) and unemployment (39%) are identified as the three major sources contributing to social tensions, while issues related to civil rights and representation are reported less frequently again.

- Perceived social tensions are highest in Gagauzia (6.9), and among respondents identifying as Gagauz (6.8), Russian (7.2) and Bulgarian (7.8), as well as among low-income groups (6.6) and supporters of the Shor party (6.9). They are lowest in Chisinau (5.7) and among respondents identifying as Romanian (5.5), as well as among high-income groups (5.4) and supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party (5.1).

- People reporting higher social tensions are less trusting of the government and have higher levels of grievances due to the country's geopolitical direction, suggesting that societal chasms revolving around Moldova's geopolitical trajectory primarily manifest at the vertical, citizen-to-state level and do not spill over to intergroup relations.

- Respondents favour participation in peaceful political action, but they rarely engage in these activities. Namely, only one in four respondents would accept participating in authorised protests or collect signatures for petitions if they felt like their rights were violated. A smaller share would take part in election campaigns, followed by online activism and only a small minority would resort to other forms of activism.

- General acceptance of violent political action in Moldova is low, but relatively higher proportion of respondents willing to consider such measures underscores a concerning potential for violence. Those open to resort to violent political action demonstrate significant dissatisfaction with freedom of expression and a strong rejection of European integration, suggesting that discontent over these issues could potentially lead to increased support for violent measures.

- Trust in institutions is low, averaging 4 out of 10. Of all institutions covered in the survey, local authorities are trusted the most (5.4), followed by electoral administration and election results (4.1), media (4), central government (3.6) and political parties (3.1). Confidence in local institutions is highest in the South (6.9) and among those identifying as Gagauz (6.5) and Bulgarians (6.5), and lowest in the North (4.3) and among those identifying as Romanian and Russian (both at 4.0).

- Trust in national authorities averages 3.6, with notable variation by language, ethnicity, income, political affiliation, and region. Romanian speakers and ethnic Romanians report higher trust scores (4.0 and 5.4, respectively), while Russian speakers and ethnic Russians score much lower (2.4 and 2.1, respectively). High-income groups show a higher trust score (4.2) compared to low-in-

come individuals (2.6). Trust also differs by political affiliation, with supporters of the Shor party (1.9) and the Party of Socialists (2.6) expressing lower confidence in national authorities than supporters of the Action and Solidarity party (6.0). Regionally, Gagauzia stands out with a notably lower score (2.1) compared to the national average of 3.6.
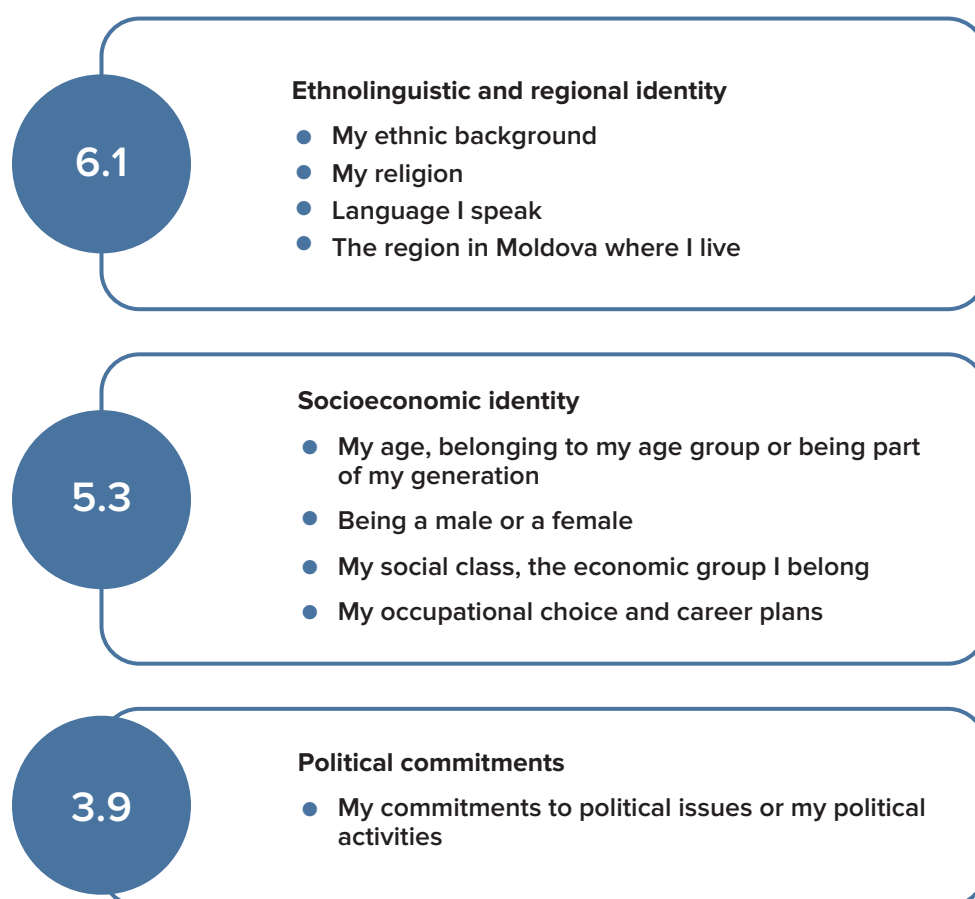
- The Authorities care indicator, which measures how open, responsive, representative and attentive the authorities are perceived to be, aligns with the trust findings, showing a below-average score of 3.8. Scores are particularly low in Gagauzia (2.7), as well as among Shor Party supporters (2.6) and those identifying as ethnic Gagauz (2.6) and Russians (3.1). Conversely, supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party (5.7) and ethnic Romanians (5.7) have relatively higher scores. Both Authorities care and Trust in central government institutions are negatively correlated (-0.514 and -0.538, respectively) with individual grievances due to geopolitical direction.

- Taken together, trust towards local and national authorities, alongside the Authorities care indicator, reveals overall lack of confidence in institutions in Moldova, with significant variations by region, ethnicity and political affiliation. Trust is notably lower in areas like Gagauzia and among ethnic Russians and Shor Party supporters, while those identifying as ethnic Romanians and supporters of the Action and Solidarity report higher confidence. These divisions carry the potential to deepen societal tensions, especially in the context of geopolitical grievances.

- The levels of support for social assistance and local public administration reforms are low, scoring 3.8 out of 10, underscoring an existing fracture in relations between citizens and their government. The level of support for policies regarding Ukrainian refugees is 6.6 out of 10, registering a decline from a corresponding figure in 2022 (7.5).

- Alliance with the EU is perceived most favourably (6.1), followed by Romania (5.8), Russia (5.5) and NATO (4). When asked about alignment, alignment with EU and non-alignment emerge as the two most popular options for Moldova's future (5.8 and 6, respectively). The corresponding figure for Russia is 4.7, identical to the 2022 value.

- Support for alignment with Russia is negatively correlated with Trust in central government institutions (-0.401), while support for alignment with the EU shows a positive correlation (0.466). This suggests that individuals with pro-Russian views tend to have lower trust in the central government, while those with pro-European views are more likely to be confident in national authorities. In other words, geopolitical preferences seem to reflect trust or mistrust in central government, supporting the idea that geopolitical grievances are primarily directed at them.

3. Findings by dimensions

3.1 Identities and intergroup relations

The STMM household survey measured the importance of different markers of respondents' identity, grouped under three distinct categories: ethnolinguistic and regional identity, socioeconomic identity and political commitments. As shown in Figure 1 below, respondents perceive ethnolinguistic and regional markers to be the most important aspect for their sense of self. Socioeconomic markers are mentioned less frequently, while commitments to political issues or political activities are considered the least important.

FIGURE 1. **Importance of identities.[12] Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**

6.1

Ethnolinguistic and regional identity
- My ethnic background
- My religion
- Language I speak
- The region in Moldova where I live

5.3

Socioeconomic identity
- My age, belonging to my age group or being part of my generation
- Being a male or a female
- My social class, the economic group I belong
- My occupational choice and career plans

3.9

Political commitments
- My commitments to political issues or my political activities

The survey also assessed the levels of Inclusive civic identity, which measures the belief that there are more things uniting people across all political, linguistic and ethnic groups in Moldova than those that separate them. The national score for this indicator is average, 5.4 out of 10; it also reflects a decrease from 6.8 compared to SCORE Moldova conducted in 2022.[13] The results indicate that political affiliations are the most divisive factor, with ethnic divisions being the least prominent.

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[12] The respondents were asked to evaluate how important each of the items (listed as bullet points in the grey boxes in Figure 1) is to their sense of self on a scale from 1 ("Not important to my sense of who I am") to 5 ("Extremely important to my sense of who I am").

[13] SCORE 2022 data can be accessed via this link: https://app.scoreforpeace.org/en/moldova/score/2022/1/map?row=tn-2-0.

FIGURE 2. **Inclusive civic identity. % "Acceptable".**

Across all ethnic groups of Moldova, there are more things that unite us than separate us	54%
Across all linguistic groups of Moldova, there are more things that unite than separate us	48%
Across all political groups of Moldova, there are more things that unite than separate us	36%
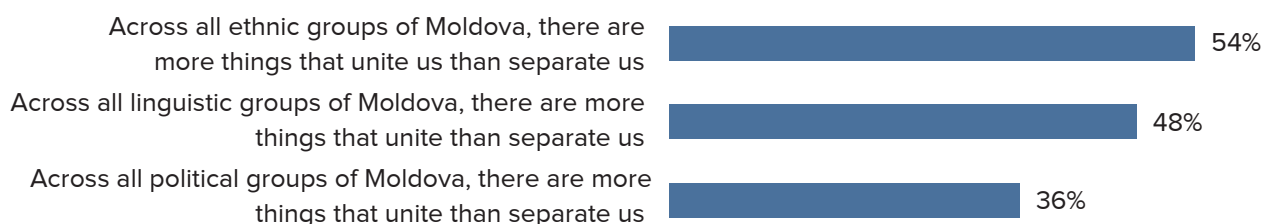
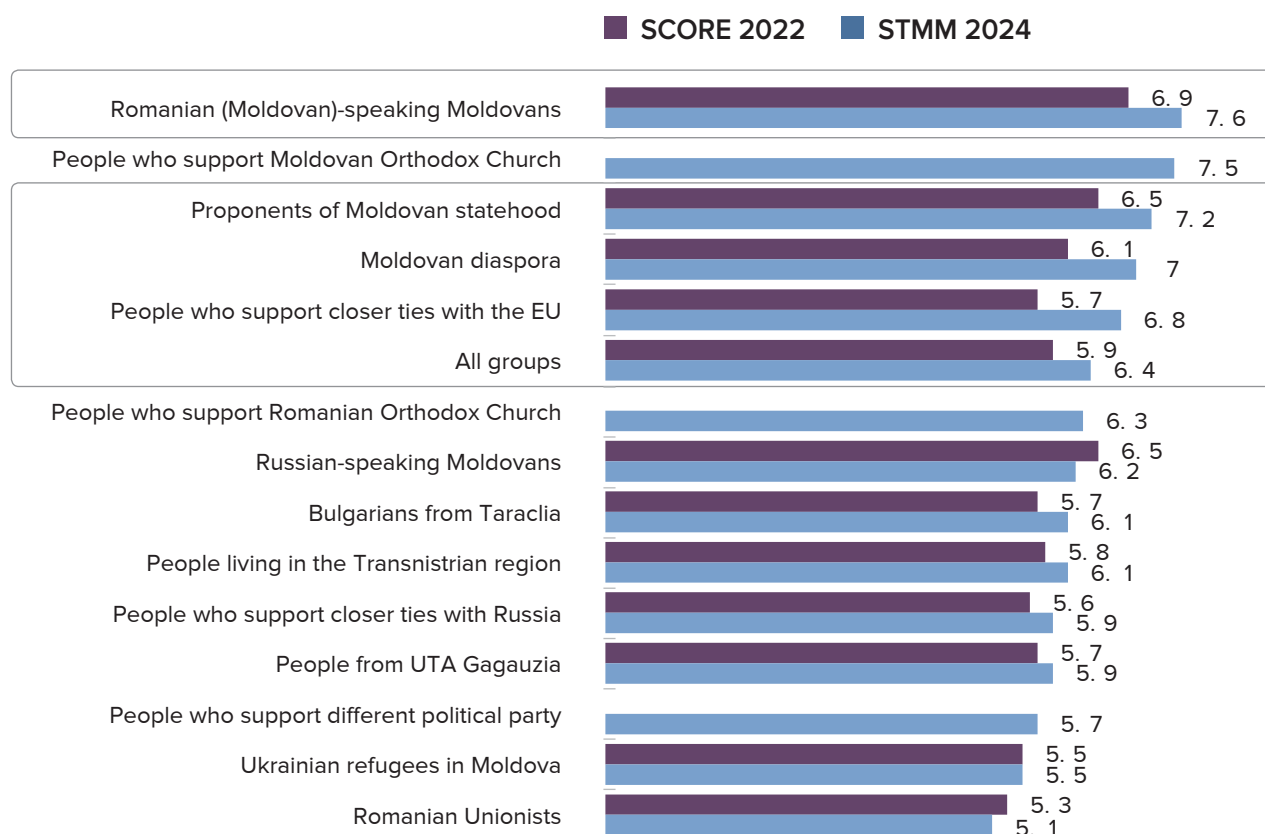**Taken together, the two findings suggest that while ethnic background is an important marker for the surveyed respondents, they do not necessarily view it as a polarising factor for intergroup relations. Conversely, even though commitments to political issues or activities are considered the least important for individual self-perception, political affiliations emerge as the most divisive factor when examined in the context of intergroup relations. This implies that polarisation in Moldova is driven more by politics than by identity.**

When asked about their attitudes towards 14 different socio-political groups in Moldova, the respondents expressed most affection towards Romanian speakers (7.6), people who support the Moldovan Orthodox Church (7.5) and proponents of Moldovan statehood (7.2). On the opposite end are the Romanian Unionists (5.1), Ukrainian refugees in Moldova (5.5), people who support different political parties (5.7) and Gagauzians (5.9).

It is worth noting that respondents demonstrate slightly **warmer feelings**[14] towards pro-Russian people (5.9) than towards the Ukrainian refugees (5.5). Here, the level of education, alongside political affiliations, emerge as an important determinant. Namely, supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party show visibly lower affection towards pro-Russian group (3.4), compared to the rest of the sample (5.9). Similarly, respondents with higher education tend to be less affectionate to pro-Russian people (5.2) than those with only primary education (6.8). There is notable regional variation as well, with Chisinau demonstrating considerably less affection towards this group (4.7) and Gagauzia scoring highest on this indicator (9.2). Additionally, when compared to SCORE Moldova 2022, STMM survey shows visible increases in the levels of affection towards certain groups. These groups are: Romanian speakers, proponents of Moldovan statehood, Moldovan diaspora and people who support closer ties with the EU. On the contrary, no notable changes are observed on any of the remaining groups.

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[14]   It should be highlighted that the indicator is measuring feelings towards different groups, and not affiliation or belonging to that group per se.

FIGURE 3. **Intergroup feelings. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10. Frames are used to highlight the groups with largest increases in scores between 2022 and 2024.**

Legend: SCORE 2022 / STMM 2024

| Group	SCORE 2022	STMM 2024
Romanian (Moldovan)-speaking Moldovans	6.9	7.6
People who support Moldovan Orthodox Church		7.5
Proponents of Moldovan statehood	6.5	7.2
Moldovan diaspora	6.1	7
People who support closer ties with the EU	5.7	6.8
All groups	5.9	6.4
People who support Romanian Orthodox Church		6.3
Russian-speaking Moldovans	6.5	6.2
Bulgarians from Taraclia	5.7	6.1
People living in the Transnistrian region	5.8	6.1
People who support closer ties with Russia	5.6	5.9
People from UTA Gagauzia	5.7	5.9
People who support different political party		5.7
Ukrainian refugees in Moldova	5.5	5.5
Romanian Unionists	5.3	5.1

Findings on intergroup dynamics in Moldova indicate some positive trends, such as increased affection for the Moldovan diaspora and pro-EU people. However, some key parameters, such as attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees and Gagauzians, remain average and score relatively lower compared to other groups. At the same time, mid-point scores could be interpreted as neutral feelings, which is not necessarily a cause for concern and may be linked with lack of personal interaction and experiences with the aforementioned groups.

3.1 Relative deprivation and grievances

Perceived relative deprivation or the feeling of being unfairly disadvantaged by life conditions (not limited to economic factors) in comparison to other people in Moldova, is another key element of the STMM framework. Overall, the national average score for relative deprivation stands at a moderate level in Moldova (4.7). Notably, this feeling is lowest among respondents under 35 (4) and highest among those over 44 (5.1). Additionally, low-income groups report higher levels of deprivation (6.2), while high-income individuals score nearly twice as low (3.5). It is also worth noting that Chisinau reflects a relatively lower perception of deprivation compared to both the overall sample and other regions, with the remaining four regions exhibiting a relative homogeneity in their values.

FIGURE 4. **Heatmap of Perceived relative deprivation. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**
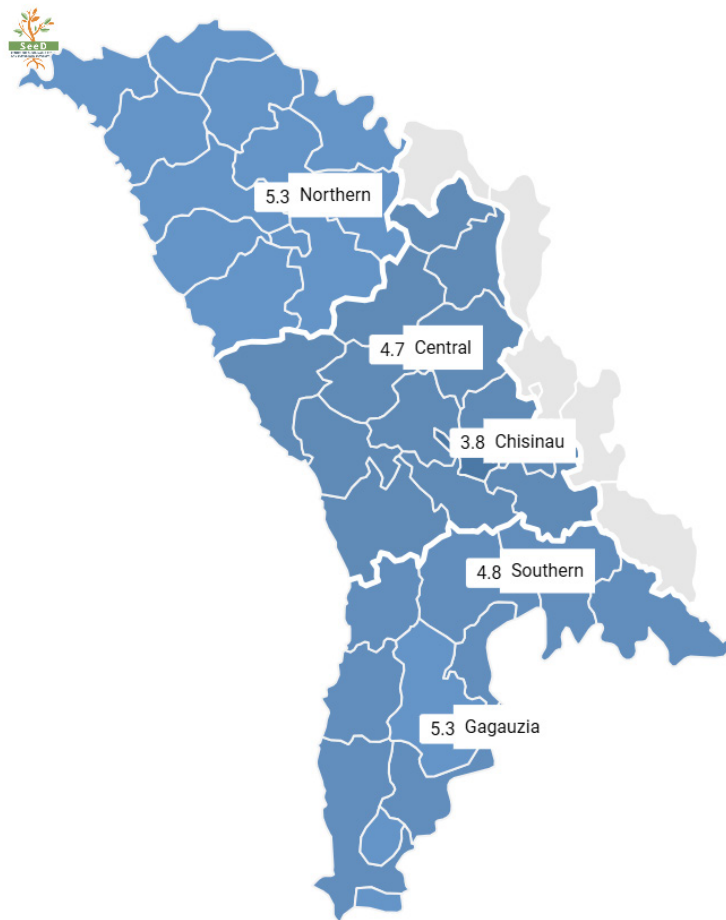
The survey also evaluated grievances related to various factors, including the country's geopolitical direction, freedom of expression, Gagauzia's autonomy status, the arrival of Ukrainian refugees and access to services and resources. Respondents were asked about both individual grievances – reflecting their personal satisfaction with current circumstances – and group grievances – assessing one's satisfaction with the situation of their ethnolinguistic group in relation to these circumstances. Findings indicate that dissatisfaction with Moldova's geopolitical direction is most prominent, with an individual grievance score of 6.1. Notably, supporters of the Action and Solidarity reported lower individual geopolitical grievances (4.2), while respondents from the South (6.9), Gagauzia (8.3) and those identifying as Russian (7.3), Bulgarian (8.1) and Gagauz (8.4), along with supporters of the Party of Socialists (7.1) and the Shor party (7.9), expressed visibly higher levels of dissatisfaction. Interestingly, grievances related to freedom of expression were reported the least, suggesting a relatively healthy state of political security in Moldova. Furthermore, no notable differences were found between individual and group-level assessments.

FIGURE 5. **Individual and group grievances.**[15] **Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**
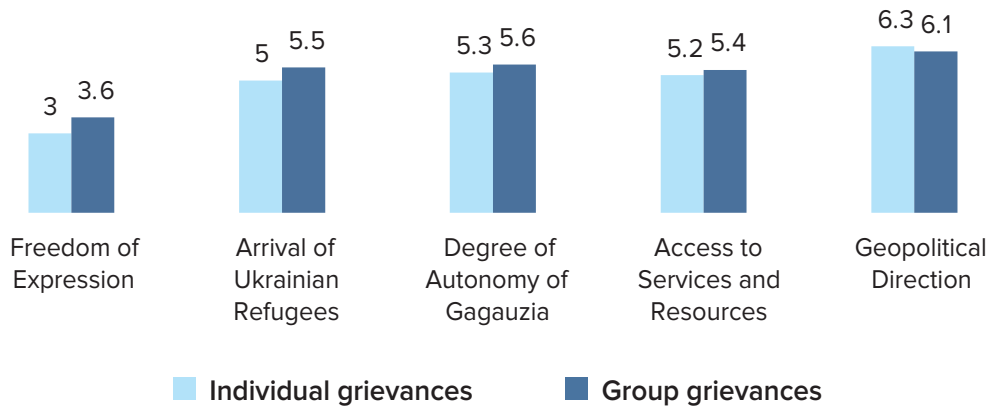
It is also worth noting that the survey showed strong negative correlations between individual dissatisfaction regarding geopolitics and several government-related indicators, such as Trust in central government institutions (-0.538), Authorities care (-0.514) and Improvement in country's economic situation (-0.510). It follows from there that geopolitical grievances are primarily directed at the authorities, meaning that if citizens are unhappy about Moldova's geopolitical trajectory, they are more likely to channel and attribute this dissatisfaction to the authorities.

3.3 Perceives social tensions

The perceived level of social tensions[16] in Moldova is slightly above the midpoint of 5, standing at 6.1 out of 10 at the national level. Ethnic identity, region of residence, income level and political affiliation were all found to play a role in respondents' perception of tensions.[17] Particularly, those who identify themselves as Romanian (5.5), who have high income (5.4) and who support the Action and Solidarity (5.1) perceive tensions to be lower in the country. Simultaneously, those identifying as Gagauz (6.8), Russian (7.2) and Bulgarian (7.8), along with residents of Gagauzia (6.9), low-income groups (6.6) and the Shor party supporters (6.9) all report higher levels of social tensions with different groups.

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[15]   To measure individual grievances, the respondents were asked "How satisfied are you with …?". To measure group grievances, the respondents were asked "How satisfied are you about the situation of [name of respondent's ethnic group] as a group regarding…?".

[16]   Measured on a scale from 0 ("Very low") to 10 ("Extremely high"). Respondents were asked the following question: How would you rate the degree of social tensions in society today?

[17]   Based on ANOVA results. For all listed groups, $F > 20$, $p < 0.05$, Cohen's $d \geq 0.4$.

FIGURE 6. **Perceptions of social tensions across different identity, regional, income and political groups. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10. The values ≥0.5 points lower than the national average are marked in dark blue. The values ≥0.5 points higher than the national average are marked in dark purple.**

Further data analysis identified the characteristics of people across three groups: those with heightened perceptions of tensions (scores 7 to 10, representing 41% of the full sample), those with medium (scores 4 to 6, 45%) or those with low tensions (scores 0 to 3, 15%). **The findings indicate that people reporting higher social tensions are less trusting of the government and have higher levels of grievances due to the country's geopolitical direction.** They also favour the EU less and Russia more. This reinforces the earlier conclusion that societal chasms primarily manifest at the vertical, citizen-to-state level and revolve around Moldova's geopolitical trajectory. Table 1 below provides further details.

Table 1. **Key characteristics and differences between groups reporting high, medium, and low levels oftensions.[18]**

Indicators	F	p value	Full sample mean	"High" tensions mean	"Low" tensions mean	"Medium" tensions mean
Authorities care	40.07	0	3.8	3.2	4.4	4.1
Action and Solidarity Party	20.72					
Trust in central government Institutions	34.93	0	3.6	2.9	4.0	4.0
Improvement in country economic situation since last year	36.58	0	3.7	3.0	4.4	4.2
Individual grievance overall (excluding autonomy)	32.48	0	4.9	5.3	4.5	4.7
Individual grievance due to geopolitical direction	24.66	0	6.3	6.9	5.9	6.0

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[18] ANOVA. Indicators selected based on Cohen's d between "High" and other groups > 0.2, but Cohen's d between "Low" and "Medium" <0.2 (indicating "Low" and"Medium" are similar). Bold indicates Cohen's d between "High" and other groups is above 0.4 (bigger difference).

[19] The degree to which one feels that Moldovan authorities represent their concerns and views, care equally about all parts of Moldova and can be trusted to do what is best for the country.

Individual grievance due to arrival of Ukrainian refugees	20.68	0	5.0	5.6	4.5	4.7
Pro-EU orientation	34.87	0	5.9	5.2	6.8	6.3
Support aligning more towards the EU	31.55	0	5.8	4.9	6.8	6.3
Sense of alliance: European Union	23.73	0	6.1	5.5	6.9	6.4
Sense of alliance: Romania	26.43	0	5.8	5.1	6.5	6.2
Pro-Russia orientation	20.54	0	5.1	5.7	4.7	4.7
Support aligning more towards Russia	24.1	0	4.7	5.5	4.1	4.2
Feelings towards people who support closer ties with Russia	20.58	0	5.9	6.5	5.2	5.7

When asked about the most significant sources of tensions in the society,[20] most respondents pointed to corruption and economic hardships. Namely, corruption and bribery (53%), impoverishment of the population (48%) and growth of unemployment (39%) are reported as top three factors contributing to increases in social tensions. Conversely, tensions related to civil rights and representation of groups were reported least frequently, by less than 10% of all respondents. It is also worth noting that the corresponding figure for geopolitical orientation stands at 12%, suggesting that while this issue is viewed as a significant source of individual and group-level grievances towards the authorities, it is not widely perceived as a major factor influencing overall societal tensions.

FIGURE 7: **Sources of tensions. % of mentions.**

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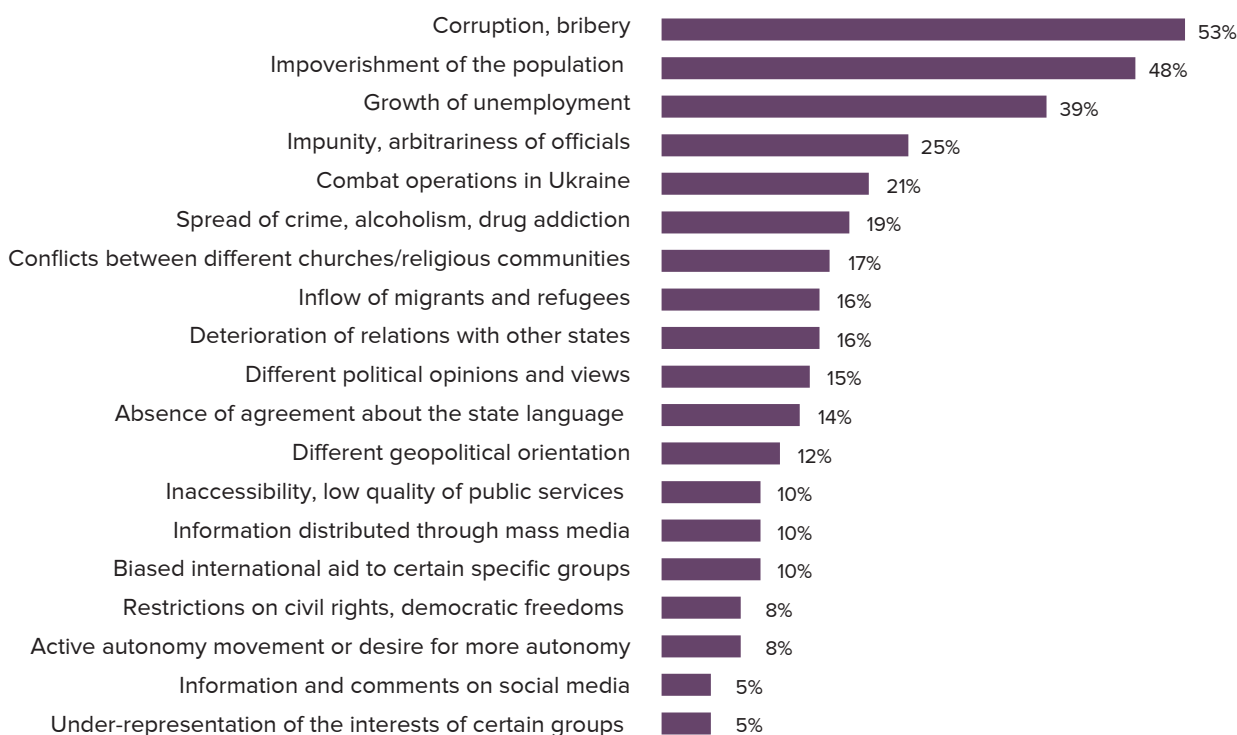
[20] The respondents were asked to choose no more than 5 answer options at the same time.

3.4 Confidence in institutions

The survey also measured trust in various institutions in Moldova, including central and local authorities, media, political parties and the electoral commission. Overall, trust is relatively low, averaging 4 out of 10, with variations across the country and among demographic groups. Namely, Trust in institutions (overall) is notably lower in the North (3.3) and Gagauzia (3.4), as well as among Shor Party supporters (2.8), ethnic Russians (2.7) and low-income groups (3.1). Conversely, trust is higher in the Centre (4.4) and among Action and Solidarity Party supporters (5.7), those identifying as ethnic Romanians (5.0) and high-income groups (4.4).

Of all institutions covered in the survey, local authorities are trusted the most (5.4). Confidence in local institutions is highest in the South (6.9) and among those identifying as ethnic Gagauz (6.5) and ethnic Bulgarians (6.5), and lowest in the North (4.3) and among those identifying as ethnic Romanian and ethnic Russian (both at 4.0). Central government institutions fare relatively worse (3.6) than local government institutions in terms of public confidence. Interestingly, Trust towards the national authorities varies significantly by language and ethnicity: Romanian speakers and those identifying as ethnic Romanian show an average of 4 and 5.4, respectively, while Russian speakers and ethnic Russians score 2.4 and 2.1, respectively, on this indicator. Additionally, high-income groups report a trust score of 4.2, which is notably higher than the figure for low-income individuals — 2.6. Political affiliations feature again, with supporters of the Shor party (1.9) and the Party of Socialists (2.6) showing visibly lower confidence in central authorities than supporters of the Action and Solidarity party (6.0). There are pronounced regional differences as well, with Gagauzia demonstrating a notably lower score of 2.1 than the full sample average of 3.6.

FIGURE 8. **The level of trust in institutions. % Somewhat + fully trust.**
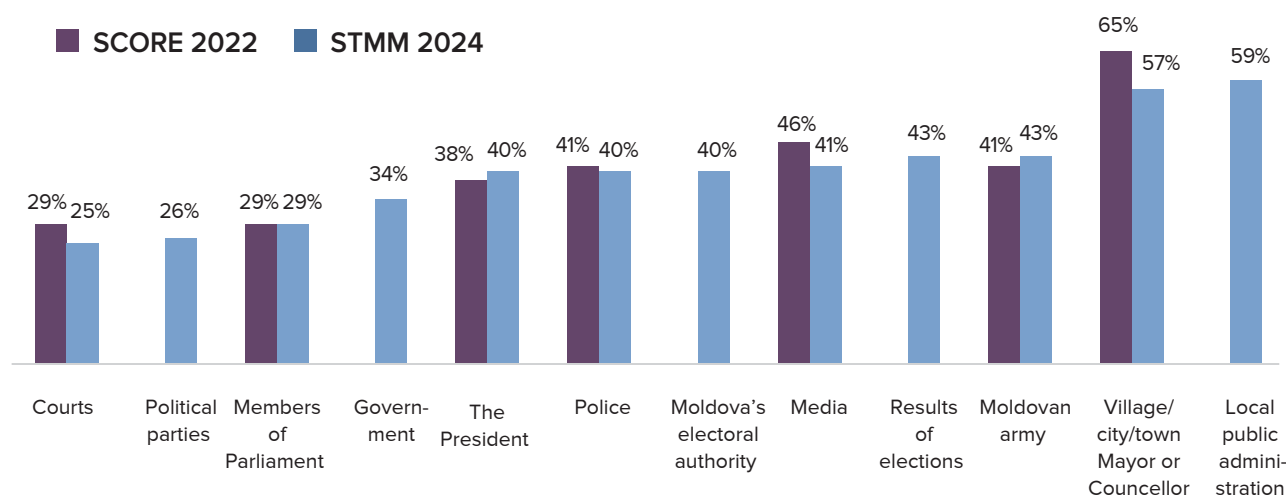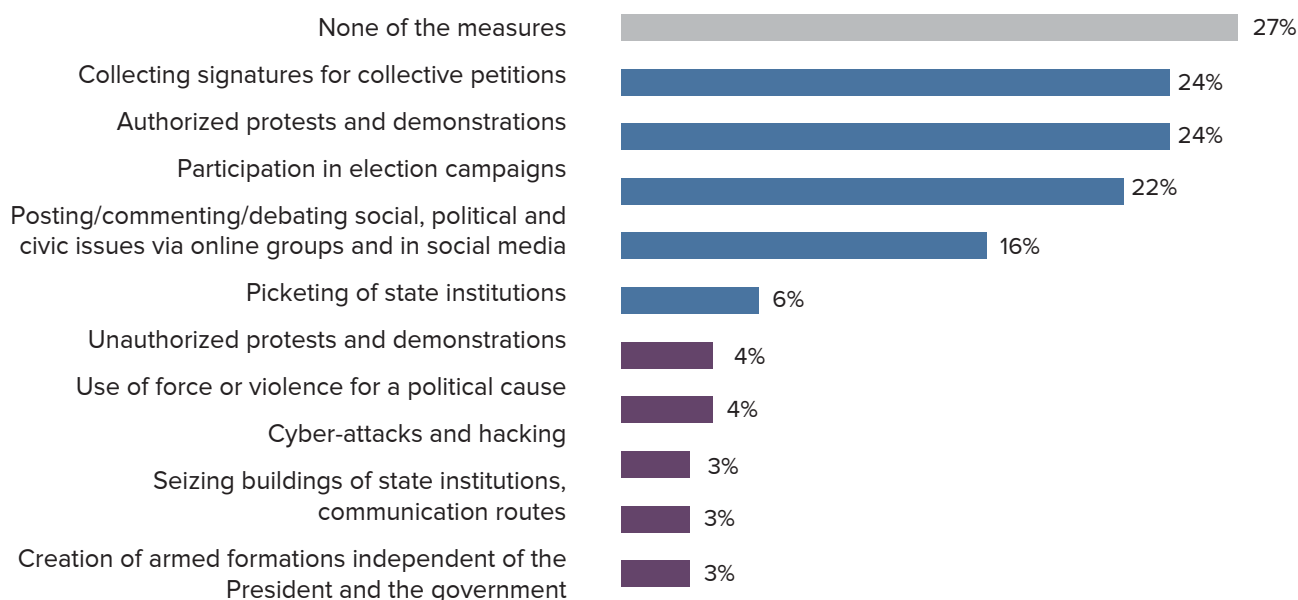
The Authorities care indicator, which measures how open, responsive, representative and attentive the authorities are perceived to be, aligns with trust findings, showing a below-average score of 3.8. Scores are particularly low in Gagauzia (2.7), as well as among Shor Party supporters (2.6) and those identifying as ethnic Gagauz (2.6) and Russians (3.1). Conversely, supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party (5.7) and ethnic Romanians (5.7) have relatively higher scores. Both Authorities care and Trust in central government institutions are negatively correlated (-0.514 and -0.538, respectively) with individual grievances due to geopolitical direction.

Taken together, the findings reveal overall distrust in institutions that varies by region, ethnicity and political affiliation. Notably, lower trust levels in areas like Gagauzia and among ethnic Russians and Shor Party supporters contrast sharply with higher confidence among ethnic Romanians and Action and Solidarity supporters, highlighting existing social fractures. These disparities carry the potential to further undermine societal cohesion in the country, particularly in relation to grievances stemming from geopolitical issues.

3.5 Potential for contentious political action

The survey also identified the most and least effective and acceptable forms of defending rights, as perceived by respondents. The findings show that almost one in four respondents would accept participating in authorised protests or collect signatures for petitions if they felt like their rights were violated. A smaller proportion would take part in election campaigns, followed by online activism and only a small minority would resort to other forms of activism.

FIGURE 9. **Acceptable and effective forms to defend rights. % of mentions. Peaceful forms are marked in dark blue. Violent forms are marked in dark purple.**

None of the measures	27%
Collecting signatures for collective petitions	24%
Authorized protests and demonstrations	24%
Participation in election campaigns	22%
Posting/commenting/debating social, political and civic issues via online groups and in social media	16%
Picketing of state institutions	6%
Unauthorized protests and demonstrations	4%
Use of force or violence for a political cause	4%
Cyber-attacks and hacking	3%
Seizing buildings of state institutions, communication routes	3%
Creation of armed formations independent of the President and the government	3%

The analysis also revealed the key characteristics of groups accepting peaceful forms of defending rights (41%), violent forms (2%), both forms (6%) or none of them (50%). The findings suggest that people who would consider violent forms of action acceptable if their rights were violated are generally younger and have tighter-linked social networks. They also exhibit lower civic adherence and more trust in the media and local government. Additionally, those who would accept both violent and peaceful forms of action have high perceived political efficacy and low perception of care from authorities. Interestingly, neither urbanity nor regional characteristics were found to play a role in acceptance of different forms of defending rights. More detailed results can be found in the Table 2 below.

TABLE 2. **Key characteristics of groups supporting peaceful forms of defending rights, violent forms of defending rights, both peaceful and violent forms, and none of forms.**

Acceptance of...	Prevalence	Characteristics
No forms of participation to defend rights [21]	50%	● Older ● Lower income ● More pro-Russian ● Low Trust in institutions (overall) ● Low Belief in community cooperation [22]
Peaceful forms (authorised protests, petitions, elections, social media debates, picketing) [23]	41%	● Low Grievances due to geopolitical direction ● Less pro-Russian ● Positive feelings towards pro-EU people and Moldovan diaspora
Both peaceful and violent forms [24]	6%	● Higher perceived political efficacy ● Lowest feeling that authorities care
Violent forms (unauthorised protests, violence, cyber-attacks, armed groups, seizing property) [25]	2%	● Younger ● Lower Civic adherence [26] ● Higher Trust in the media ● Higher Trust in local government ● Higher Social networks and Reciprocity, [27] Social attachment [28]

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[21]   ANOVA. Cohen's d > 0.2 between None and any other group, and None belongs to its own subgroup. p < 0.05.

[22]   The degree to which one feels that people in their community should work together to develop the community and have the capacity to make positive changes by coming together.

[23]   ANOVA. Cohen's d > 0.2 between Peaceful and any other group, and Peaceful belongs to its own subgroup. p < 0.05.

[24]   ANOVA. Cohen's d > 0.2 between Both and any other group, and Both belongs to its own subgroup. p < 0.05.

[25]   ANOVA. Cohen's d > 0.2 between Violent and any other group, and Violent belongs to its own subgroup. p < 0.05.

[26]   The extent to which one justifies cheating on taxes, accepting bribes, avoiding a fare on public transport and claiming state benefits they are not entitled to.

[27]   The degree to which one believes they could borrow money from a person or group in their community in case of need, they could count on their neighbours to take care of their children for a day or two and that their friends can come to them to share their problems and get help.

[28]   The extent to which one feels attached to their community.

The survey also examined participation and the intention to participate various political actions, both violent and peaceful. Overall, the findings show trends similar to acceptance figures, but the intention to participate or previous participation in political actions is twice as much as the acceptance levels, which warrants attention. Specifically, prior use of violent actions, as reported by the surveyed respondents, hovers around 1-2%, while the intention to engage in such action stands at approximately 7-9% (see Table 2).

FIGURE 10. **Participation/intention to participate. % of mentions. Peaceful forms are marked in green. Violent forms are marked in red.**

	Yes, often	Yes, several times + once or twice	No, but would do if had the chance	No, would never do this	DK/NR
🟢 Attended authorized protests and demonstrations	3%	11%	16%	67%	3%
🟢 Posted, commented, debated social/political/civic issues in social media	4%	10%	16%	68%	3%
🟢 Picketed state institutions	2%		8%	88%	3%
🔴 Attended unauthorized protests and demonstrations	2%		8%	88%	2%
🔴 Use of force or violence for a political cause			7%	91%	2%
🔴 Conducted cyber-attacks and hacking	1%		7%	91%	1%
🔴 Seized buildings of state institutions, blocked communication routes			9%	89%	2%

- Yes, often
- Yes, several times + once or twice
- No, but would do if had the chance
- No, would never do this
- DK/NR

To complement the findings, the respondents were divided into two groups: those who have not done but would do at least one of the violent actions (attending unauthorised protests; use of force or violence for a political cause; cyber-attacks and hacking; seizing buildings of state institutions) and those who have not done and would not do any of the violent actions.[29] The analysis shows that people considering participating in violent actions are more likely to complain about restrictions on freedom of expression than those who are not considering such participation. Additionally, they have lower trust in their family, but higher trust in people from another region or strangers (i.e. Generalised social trust). They also exhibit lower confidence in community cooperation and tend to be less pro-EU and pro-Romania.

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[29] The people who had already resorted to any of these measures (15 people) were intentionally ignored due to small sample size.

TABLE 3. **Indicator values for groups who would have not done and would not do any of the violent actions, and for who have not, but who would do at least one violent action. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**

|	Total	No, I have not and would not take any violent actions	I have not, but would do at least one violent action
Individual Grievance due to Freedom of Expression	3	2.9	3.9
Trust in Family	9.4	9.5	8.9
Generalised Social Trust	2.7	2.6	3.7
Belief in Community Cooperation	7.8	7.9	7.2
Feelings towards People who support closer ties with the European Union	6.8	6.9	5.7
Feelings towards Romanian (Moldovan)-speaking Moldovans	7.6	7.7	6.7
Feelings towards Moldovan diaspora	7	7.1	5.8
Sense of Alliance: Romania	5.8	5.9	4.8
Support Aligning More Towards the EU	5.8	6	4.2
Fluency in Ukrainian	1.6	1.5	2.8
Ukrainian Identity	0.7	0.6	1.8

Overall, the survey indicates that while general acceptance of violent political action in Moldova is low, relatively higher proportion of respondents willing to consider such measures underscores a concerning potential for violence. Younger individuals and those with close-knit social networks, along with those exhibiting lower civic adherence and a perception that authorities are indifferent to their concerns, are more likely to view violence as an acceptable option. Furthermore, those open to such actions demonstrate significant dissatisfaction with freedom of expression and a strong rejection of European integration, suggesting that discontent over these areas could potentially lead to increased support for violent measures.

Attitudes towards the government policies about Ukrainian refugees,[30] another indicator measured in the household survey, demonstrated a decline from 7.5 in 2022 (as measured in SCORE) to 6.6 in 2024. Notably, in 2024, supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party approve these policies to a much higher extent (8) than those supporting the Party of Socialists (5.6) and the Shor Party (4.8). Moreover, people with higher education show higher support (7.2) than those with primary education (5.7). Trust in central government and sense of alliance to NATO, EU and Romania all show positive correlations with this indicator, suggesting that the more pro-western sentiments one has, the more likely they are to be supportive of Ukrainians.

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[30] The respondents were asked how much they support that Moldova provides assistance to refugees from Ukraine, i.e. by giving them the housing and support they need, and that Moldova should close its borders to refugees from Ukraine.

supporters of the Action and Solidarity Party approve these policies to a much higher extent (8) than those supporting the Party of Socialists (5.6) and the Shor Party (4.8). Moreover, people with higher education show higher support (7.2) than those with primary education (5.7). Trust in central government and sense of alliance to NATO, EU and Romania all show positive correlations with this indicator, suggesting that the more pro-western sentiments one has, the more likely they are to be supportive of Ukrainians.The survey also measured attitudes towards social assistance and local public administration reforms in Moldova, two key policy reforms of the past few years, showing low overall support for these reforms, 3.8 out of 10. Geographic and political differences emerge again, with supporters of the Action and Solidarity party (5) and respondents living in the capital (4.8) showing higher overall endorsement. In contrast, supporters of the Shor party (2.9) and the Party of Socialists (3.4), along with residents of rural areas (3.4) and those living in the North (3.1), South (3.4) and Gagauzia (3.3), demonstrate lower support for these reforms.

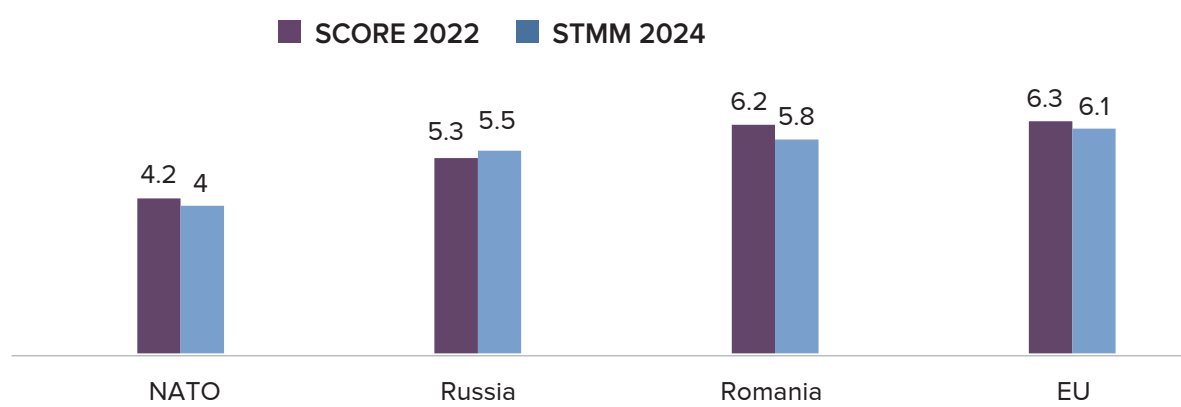FIGURE 11. **Support for reforms and policies. Mean scores from 0 to 10.**
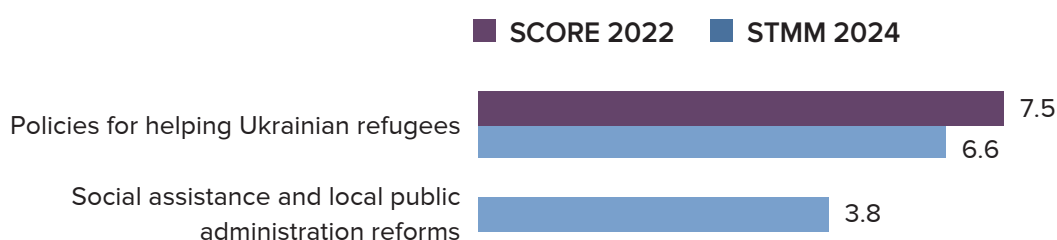
The findings outlined above have several implications. The decline in support for government policies regarding Ukrainian refugees could widen divisions within the Moldovan society, as differing political affiliations and education levels create contrasting perceptions of solidarity and commitment. This fragmentation could also undermine the already difficult state of the Ukrainian refugees in Moldova. Moreover, low approval ratings for social assistance and local public administration reforms, coupled with below average trust in institutions and perception of care from the authorities, indicate an existing fracture in vertical relations between citizens and their government, with many Moldovans feeling excluded from decision-making processes. To bridge this gap, the authorities must embrace inclusive and participatory methods of governance, addressing the specific concerns of less supportive demographics.

3.7 Geopolitical orientations

The household survey also showed that the European Union is perceived most favourably, followed by Romania and Russia, while NATO is perceived least favourably. Notably, EU support is highest in Chisinau (7.2) and lowest in Gagauzia (3.5). Conversely, support for Russia is lowest in the capital (4.1) and highest in Gagauzia (8.2). Furthermore, people with higher education (4.6) are less favourable of Russia than those with primary education (6.4). When compared to the SCORE Moldova data from 2022,[31] no notable changes are observed. The survey also measured support for alignment with various geopolitical entities. Among the alignment options, alignment with the EU emerged as the most preferred one, with a difference of 1.1 score points compared to Russia. However, non-alignment remained the top choice among respondents, slightly surpassing the EU. Notably, there was a small increase in support for EU alignment from 2022 to 2024, while support for Russia remained unchanged. Support for non-alignment was not measured in the SCORE 2022 survey.
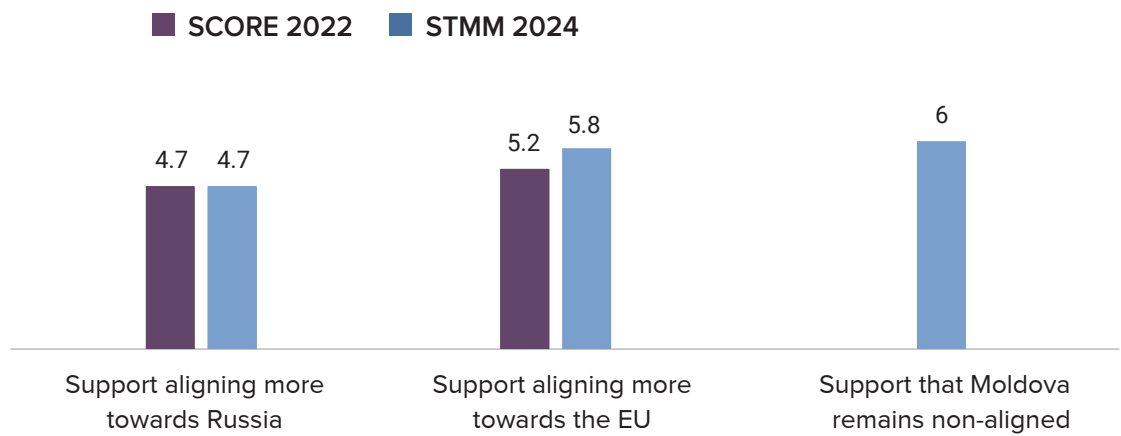
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[31] SCORE 2022 data can be accessed via the link https://app.scoreforpeace.org/en/moldova/score/2022/1/map?row=tn-2-0.

FIGURE 12: **Sense of alliance with different countries, unions, and regions. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**

Legend: ■ SCORE 2022 ■ STMM 2024

	NATO	Russia	Romania	EU
SCORE 2022	4.2	5.3	6.2	6.3
STMM 2024	4	5.5	5.8	6.1

While there are no major regional differences on the non-alignment indicator, the respondents living in Chişinău (7.3) show much higher support for aligning with the EU than those living in Gagauzia (2.9). In terms of EU alignment, supporters of the Action and Solidarity score nearly three times higher (9.1) than supporters of the Shor party (3.1) and the Party of Socialists (3.4). Regarding alignment with Russia, the highest levels of support are found among residents of Gagauzia (8.5), as well as supporters of the Shor party (8.1) and the Party of Socialists (7.6). Conversely, residents of Chişinău (3.2) and supporters of the Action and Solidarity (1.5) are significantly less favourable towards this option. Interestingly, support for alignment with Russia is negatively correlated with Trust in central government institutions (-0.401), while support for alignment with the EU is positively correlated with the same indicator (0.466), substantiating the argument that geopolitical grievances are directed more towards the national authorities and does not spill over to other layers of Moldovan society, including intergroup relations.

FIGURE 12: **Support for alignment towards the EU, Russia, or non-alignment. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**

Legend: ■ SCORE 2022 ■ STMM 2024

	Support aligning more towards Russia	Support aligning more towards the EU	Support that Moldova remains non-aligned
SCORE 2022	4.7	5.2	
STMM 2024	4.7	5.8	6

Taken together, the two indicators suggest a fragile geopolitical consensus in Moldova, with respondents expressing mixed preferences about various orientations. While many support non-alignment and EU integration, opinions on the latter vary significantly by region and political affiliation. This highlights the complexity of public sentiment around the country's foreign policy and the need for careful and targeted engagement from policymakers.

4. Conclusions

The STMM household survey reveals important insights into identity and intergroup dynamics in Moldova. It shows that respondents view ethnolinguistic and regional markers as more central to their sense of self, compared to socioeconomic factors or political affiliations. However, despite the importance of ethnic identity, respondents do not perceive it as a significant source of polarisation. Instead, political affiliations emerge as the most divisive factor when considered in the context of intergroup relations. **These findings indicate that polarisation in Moldova is more political than identity driven.** In other words, while Moldovans maintain a strong sense of ethnolinguistic and regional identity, this does not appear to fuel intergroup tensions. It is worth noting, however, that the national score for Inclusive civic identity, an indicator measuring perceived unity across political, linguistic and ethnic lines, experienced a visible decrease from 2022, averaging at 5.4 out of 10. This warrants attention, as it indicates increasing polarisation across the country.

The survey also examined intergroup feelings towards various communities in the country, showing that overall, **respondents tend to have neutral attitudes towards most groups**, with no strong extremes in the level affection or animosity. Interestingly, when compared to SCORE Moldova 2022, the STMM survey shows notable increases in affection towards Romanian speakers, proponents of Moldovan statehood, the Moldovan diaspora and those advocating for closer ties with the EU, which is a positive development and can be further leveraged to foster unity and cooperation among different sociopolitical groups in Moldova.

The survey also examined grievances related to various internal and external factors in the country, showing that **dissatisfaction with geopolitical direction is the most prominent**, with a score of 6.1. Supporters of the Action and Solidarity party report lower geopolitical grievances (4.2), while respondents from Gagauzia, the South, and those identifying as ethnic Russians and ethnic Bulgarians, express higher levels of dissatisfaction. Interestingly, grievances related to Moldova's geopolitical trajectory have a strong negative correlation with Trust in central government, which, itself, is negatively correlated with Support for alignment with Russia and positively correlated with Support for alignment with the EU. It follows from there that grievances around geopolitical orientation are primarily directed at the authorities and manifest at the vertical, citizen-to-state level.

The level of social tensions, as perceived by the respondents, is slightly above the mid-point of 5, standing at 6.1 out of 10 at the national level. Ethnic identity region of residence, income level and political affiliation were all found to playa role in respondents' perception of social tensions. **When asked about the most significant sources of tensions in the society, most respondents pointed to corruption and economic hardships.** Namely, corruption and bribery (53%), impoverishment of the population (48%) and growth of unemployment (39%) are reported as top three factors contributing to increases in social tensions. It is also worth noting here that the corresponding figure for geopolitical orientation stands at 12%, suggesting that while this issue is viewed as a key source of grievances towards the authorities, it is not widely perceived as a major factor influencing overall societal tensions.

The survey findings on geopolitical aspirations show that support for alignment with the EU has increased, rising from 5.2 in 2022 to 5.8 in 2024. However, **non-alignment still surpasses EU support,** averaging 6, while support for alignment with Russia remains unchanged, at 4.7. Importantly, the survey found significant differences in alignment preferences, with Chişinău residents and Action and Solidarity party supporters showing strong support for EU alignment, while residents of Gagauzia and supporters of the Shor Party and Party of Socialists express lower support for this option. The results for alignment with Russia are the reverse: Chişinău residents and Action and Solidarity supporters are the least supportive of this option, while

residents of Gagauzia and supporters of the Shor Party and Party of Socialists are the most supportive. Overall, these figures suggest that there is a fragile geopolitical consensus in Moldova, with respondents expressing mixed preferences about various orientations. This highlights the complexity of public opinion around the country's geopolitical orientation and calls for careful and targeted engagement and communication from policymakers.

The survey findings also highlight **an overall lack of trust in institutions**, with an average score of 4 out of 10. Local government is the most trusted institution, while central government, the judiciary and political parties are least trusted. **Trust in central authorities is divided along regional, ethnic and political lines**, with Romanian speakers, ethnic Romanians and supporters of the Action and Solidarity party reporting higher levels of confidence, while Russian speakers, ethnic Russians, residents of Gagauzia and supporters of the Shor Party show much lower trust. These figures merit close attention as they indicate existing fractures between citizens and their government, with many Moldovans feeling excluded from decision-making processes. To bridge this gap, the authorities must embrace inclusive and participatory methods of governance, addressing the specific concerns of less supportive segments.

The survey also finds that **respondents overwhelmingly favour peaceful forms of political action, but it also shows that they rarely engage in these activities**. Namely, only one in four respondents reported that they would accept participating in authorised protests or collect signatures for petitions if they felt like their rights were violated. A smaller share would take part in election campaigns, followed by online activism and only a small minority would resort to other forms of activism, including violent. The survey also shows that while the general acceptance of violent political action is low, relatively higher proportion of respondents are willing to consider using such measures. Importantly, those open to such actions demonstrate significant dissatisfaction with freedom of expression and a strong rejection of European integration, suggesting that further discontent over these areas could lead to higher support for violent measures. This is especially salient for European integration, as geopolitical grievances, including that about EU integration, emerge as a major source of grievance for the entire sample of respondents.

Lastly, the survey reveals that r**espondents are only moderately favourable towards Ukrainian refugees as a group, but they still give above-average support for policies designed to assist them**. Notably, however, support has declined from 7.5 in 2022 to 6.6 in 2024, highlighting a need to rethink how the issue is communicated to the public. It is worth noting here that the survey suggests the support to Ukrainian refugees to be closely linked to pro-western orientation, meaning that the more pro-western sentiments one has, the more likely they are to be supportive of Ukrainians. Although the current level of public support is not overly concerning, for it to resonate more effectively, it may be worth separating the issue from geopolitical considerations and framing it more clearly through a human rights perspective.

5. Annex

5.1 Glossary of indicators

Indicator	Definition
Authorities care	The degree to which one feels that Moldovan authorities represent their concerns and views, care equally about all parts of Moldova and can be trusted to do what is best for the country.
Belief in community cooperation	The degree to which one feels that people in their community should work together to develop the community and have the capacity to make positive changes by coming together.
Civic adherence	The extent to which one justifies cheating on taxes, accepting bribes, avoiding a fare on public transport and claiming state benefits they are not entitled to.
Generalised social trust	The level of trust one feels towards strangers and people from other regions.
Group dissatisfaction with access to services and resources	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the level access to services and resources that their ethnic group has.
Group dissatisfaction with arrival of Ukrainian refigees	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the situation of their ethnic group regarding the arrival of Ukrainian refugees to Moldova.
Group dissatisfaction with freedom of expression	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the situation of their ethnic group regarding freedom of expression in their country.
Group dissatisfaction with geopolitical direction	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the situation of their ethnic group regarding geopolitical direction of their country.
Group dissatisfaction with access degree of Autonomy of Gagauzia	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the situation of their ethnic group regarding the degree of autonomy that Gagauzia has.
Importance of ethnolinguistic and regional identity	The extent to which one considers ethnolinguistic and regional background important to their sense of self.
Importance of political commitments on identity	The extent to which one considers political commitments important to their sense of self.
Importance of socioeconomic identity	The extent to which one considers socioeconomic markers important to their sense of self.

Improvement in country economic situation since last year	Whether one thinks that the economic situation of the country is better than it was a year ago.
Inclusive civic identity	The degree to which one feels that there are more things that unitenrather than separate people across all ethnic, political and linguistic groups in Moldova.
Individual dissatisfaction with access to services and resources	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with access to services and resources in their country.
Individual dissatisfaction with arrival of Ukrainian refugees	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the arrival of Ukrainian refugees to Moldova.
Individual dissatisfaction with freedom of expression	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with freedom of expression in their country.
Individual dissatisfaction with geopolitical direction	The extent to which one feels dissatisfaction with the geopolitical direction of their country.
Perceived level of social tensions	The degree to which one feels that there are social tensions in society today.
Perceived personal relative deprivation	The extent to which one believes their life situation is poor, unfair, and feel angry and resentful about it.
Perceived political efficacy	The degree to which one feels that if the central or local authorities of Moldova made a decision that violates their legal rights and interests, they would be able to do something against it.
Positive feelings towards all groups	The level of warmth and affection, as opposed to coldness and hostility, that one feels towards different ethnic, linguistic, geographic and religious groups in the society.
Positive feelings towards [various groups]	The level of warmth and affection, as opposed to coldness and hostility, that one feels towards:Bulgarians from Taraclia;

- Moldovan diaspora;
- People from UTA Gagauzia;
- People living in the Transnistrian Region;
- People who support closer ties with Russia
- People who support closer ties with the EU;
- People who support a different political party;
- People who support the Moldovan Orthodox Church;
- People who support the Romanian Orthodox Church;
- Proponents of Moldovan statehood;
- Romanian (Moldovan)-speaking Moldovans;
- Romanian unionists;
- Russian-speaking Moldovans;
- Ukrainian refugees in Moldova.

Sense of agency	The degree to which one feels that people like them can influence the state of affairs in Moldova.
Sense of alliance with NATO	The extent to which one feels favourable towards NATO.
Sense of alliance with Romania	The extent to which one feels favourable towards Romania.
Sense of alliance with Russia	The extent to which one feels favourable towards Russia.
Sense of alliance with the European Union	The extent to which one feels favourable towards the EU.
Social attachment	The extent to which one feels attached to their community.
Social networks and reciprocity	The degree to which one believes they could borrow money from a person or group in their community in case of need, they could count on their neighbours to take care of their children for a day or two and that their friends can come to them to share their problems and get help.
Support aligning more towards Russia	The degree to which one thinks that Moldova should align its political future more towards Russia.
Support aligning more towards the EU	The degree to which one thinks that Moldova should align its political future more towards the EU.
Support for policies about Ukrainian refugees	The level of support for the policies targeting Ukrainian refugees.
Support for reforms	The level of support for the local public administration reform and the social assistance reform in Moldova.
Support that Moldova remains non-aligned	The degree to which one thinks that Moldova should remain strictly non-aligned and not join either pro-European or pro-Russian institutions.
Trust in central government Institutions	The combined level of trust in central government institutions such as the President, government, members of Parliament, courts, police and Moldovan army.
Trust in electoral authority and election results	The combined level of trust in Moldova's electoral authority and results of elections.
Trust in institutions	The combined level of trust in central government institutions, local government institutions, media, political parties, electoral authority and election results.

Sense of agency	The degree to which one feels that people like them can influence the state of affairs in Moldova.
Sense of alliance with NATO	The extent to which one feels favourable towards NATO.
Sense of alliance with Romania	The extent to which one feels favourable towards Romania.
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Trust in central government Institutions	The combined level of trust in central government institutions such as the President, government, members of Parliament, courts, police and Moldovan army.
Trust in electoral authority and election results	The combined level of trust in Moldova's electoral authority and results of elections.
Trust in institutions	The combined level of trust in central government institutions, loca government institutions, media, political parties, electoral authority and election results.

Trust in local government institutions	The combined level of trust in local government institutions such as the village/city/town Mayor and Councillor and local public administration.
Trust in political parties	The level of trust in political parties.
Trust in the media	The level of trust in media.

5.2 How to read mean scores

STMM quantifies societal phenomena using indicators based on questions from the STMM survey. Using several questions to create a single indicator enables reliable measurement of a particular phenomenon from different perspectives. Scores for each indicator range from 0 to 10, where 0 corresponds to the total absence of a phenomenon in an individual, location or in society, and 10 corresponds to its strong presence. Heatmaps, such as the one shown below, indicate the mean score achieved by each region in the sample for that indicator.

For example, the indicator Inclusive civic identity, is measured using three questions rated on a scale from 0 ("Absolutely unacceptable") to 3 ("Absolutely acceptable").

- Q1. Across all ethnic groups of Moldova, there are more things that unite us than separate us.
- Q2. Across all political groups of Moldova, there are more things that unite than separate us.
- Q3. Across all linguistic groups of Moldova, there are more things that unite than separate us.

The responses to these questions are then summed and rescaled from 0 to 10, resulting in the scores displayed on the map below, based on the equation:

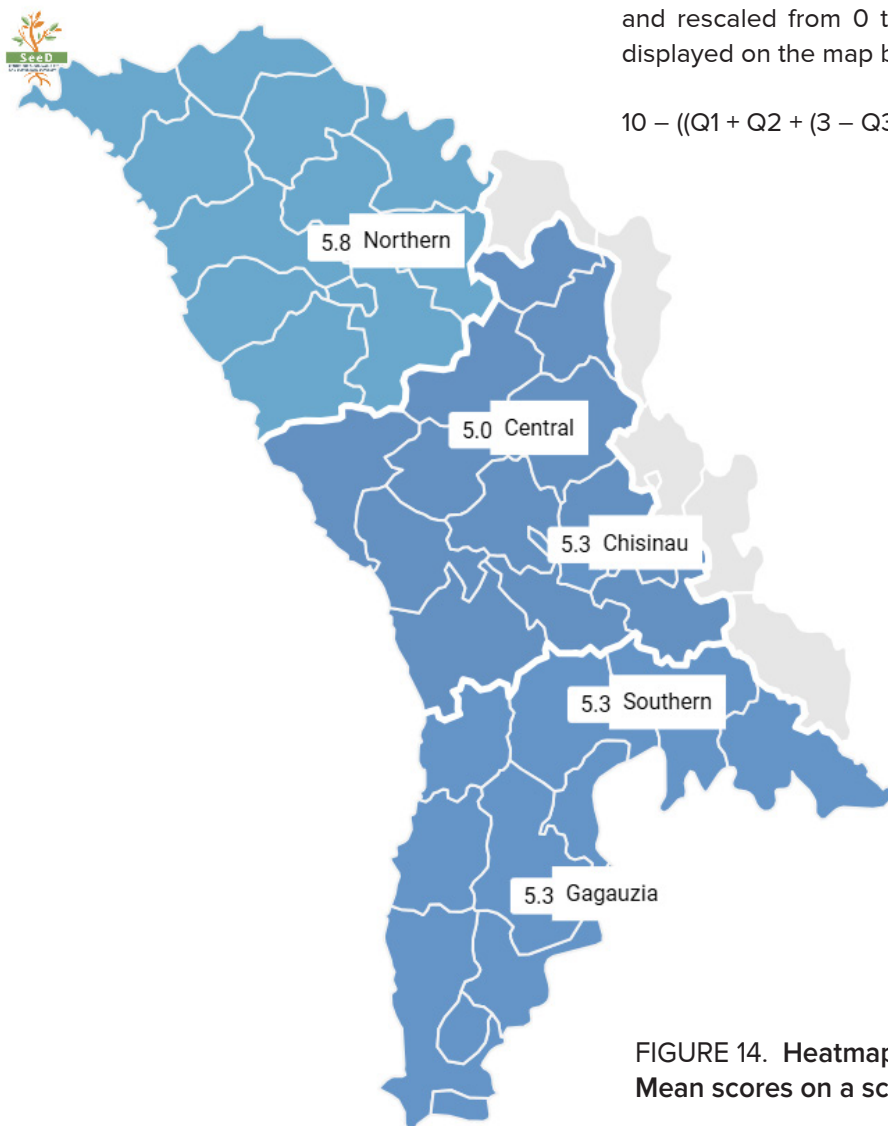$$10 - ((Q1 + Q2 + (3 - Q3)) * 10/9)$$

FIGURE 14. **Heatmap of Inclusive civic identity. Mean scores on a scale from 0 to 10.**

5.3 About partners

The Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) works with international development organisations, governments and civil society leaders to design and implement evidence-based and people-centred strategies for the development of peaceful, inclusive and sustainable societies. Working globally, SeeD provides policy advice for social transformation that is based on citizen engagement strategies and empirical understanding of the behaviour of individuals, groups and communities.

UNDP is the leading United Nations agency fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with abroad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, it helps nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet.