

# RESTART: lessons on leveraging new investments, strategies and approaches to fund the transition to well-being economies in the Republic of Moldova

## Alexei Buzu

Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova and WHO Champion for the European Well-being Economy Initiative (2)  
In a period marked by economic volatility, political instability and social inequities, governments all over the world are increasingly gravitating towards transitioning to well-being economies that have a direct positive impact on citizen's lives.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova is not an exception in this case. The strategic priority of European Union (EU) integration is closely linked to the holistic development of our society and increasing the quality of life of citizens, focusing not only on economic prosperity but also on social and environmental well-being. This hasn't been a straightforward process and it is definitely not concluded, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine, high inflation and low economic growth, but we are on the right path. The starting point is increasing the trust in national institutions and public authorities by proving that the designed policies envisage and are directed towards achieving a better quality of life.

What I've done in my role as Minister of Labour and Social Protection is to start the most extensive reform of the social assistance system: "RESTART". This is a complex and challenging reform, yet rewarding and result-generating, by which we aim to improve the quality and overall governance of social services, invest in human resources, and increase the efficiency of the allocated funds while maximizing the benefit for the end user and ensuring better social inclusion. This reform is coupled with our endeavour of digitalization of services that will ensure that every citizen can easily access the full range of services and benefits.

As the portfolio of my ministry is broad, encompassing the social inclusion of different categories of citizens, as well as ensuring greater gender equality, creating equal opportunities for men and women, combating domestic violence and violence against women, integrating refugees, combating child poverty, creating employment opportunities, offering strong support for disabled and elderly people, etc., the efforts required by my team are enormous. Within a context of squeezed fiscal space and economic challenges, the government I am a part of and I personally always work on attracting new investments and support from development partners for our initiatives and reforms. This is not an easy task, especially because the external donors are very specific about the expected outcomes and deliverables. Transparency and accountability have been prioritized, with measures such as anticorruption initiatives and open governance practices. Engaging citizens through participatory mechanisms, such as public consultation meetings and platforms of cooperation with nongovernmental organizations and social partners, has allowed the Republic of Moldova to address public concerns directly and shape policies that resonate with the needs and aspirations of its people.

In conclusion, the transition to a well-being economy requires joint efforts from governments, stakeholders and citizens. Through innovative

financing, policy reforms and inclusive governance, we can create societies that prioritize the well-being of all individuals and foster sustainable development and prosperity.

## References<sup>1</sup>

1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: United Nations; 2015 (A/RES/70/1; <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>).
2. New WHO Champion for the European Well-being Economy Initiative [website]. In: WHO Regional Office for Europe/News. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2023 (<https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/16-11-2023-new-who-champion-for-the-european-well-being-economy-initiative>).

<sup>1</sup> All references were accessed  
7 March 2024.

### © World Health Organization 2024

Some rights reserved. This work is available under the CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence.

The named authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in this document.

This piece is part of a compilation of pieces from leading experts, nongovernmental organizations, politicians and practitioners on signposting ways to steer a new direction for our economy to deliver better lives and healthier societies for all. This compilation was developed by the WHO European Office for Investment for Health and Development (WHO Venice Office) as background to the WHO event “Reimagining an economy for resilient and healthier societies that leave no one behind”, Venice, Italy, 9 April 2024.