

# BUSINESSES THAT CHANGED COMMUNITIES

Between  
Western  
support and  
Eastern  
propaganda

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**B | S | T** The Black Sea Trust  
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# Introduction

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Countering anti-Western propaganda - identifying it, the sources through which it manifests and propagates, the target audience, the stakes and the decryption of the authors or the intentions/interests behind them - is one of the major concerns of experts in geopolitics, security and diplomacy. The East, close to Russia, with states member or not of the European Union, is a stake and therefore a target. The source of the most subtle, frequent and toxic messages of this propaganda is undoubtedly Moscow.

Anti-Western messages are present in different environments - online, the media, getting into the public or hidden agenda of politicians, but also taking other forms. That is why it is important to choose the sources of information for citizens in these countries.

This project "Telling the true stories of economic development: A new way to combat anti-western propaganda and disinformation" - analyzed on the one hand how the Romanian and Moldovan public is being informed, the perception of Eastern-Western influences, as well as the ways in which anti-Western propaganda manifests.

On the other hand, the project aimed to find and gather results and facts of concrete initiatives of the West in Romania and the Republic of Moldova. We need to understand what is going on in the economic area of these societies, besides the political area - how anti-Western propaganda manifests here, how citizens perceive some influences from both the West and the East and, especially, who - the East or the West - left something behind.

Analyzes of anti-Western propaganda occurrences in Romania and the Republic of Moldova have been coupled with the stories of businesses on both sides of the Prut. Entrepreneurs from the Republic of Moldova were also invited to describe how they see the West, if it produced a change in their life, community or country, and what would mean standing away from European values, for example.

The analysis of the perception of information sources and Eastern-Western messages was made by EURACTIV.ro through two online surveys answered by more than 800 citizens. The perception of entrepreneurs in the Republic of Moldova on the impact of the West in their life, community and business was reported with the support of Report.md team - a news portal on European policies, supported by the Romanian Center for European Policies - Republic of Moldova and EURACTIV.ro.

# Disinformation and propaganda - targets and treatment

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*„The disinformation campaigns attributed to the Russian Federation (...) all have the same common denominator: weakening the political unity of the European countries, undermining the transatlantic relationship and creating political support for eliminating sanctions introduced by the EU and the US against Russia after the annexation of Crimea”.*

**Professor Corneliu Bjola, EURACTIV Romania interview,  
March 2018**



*„Europeans were slow enough to recognize the magnitude and virulence of these campaigns, but I am now convinced that the situation is beginning to recover. Work is being done very intensively at different levels to improve the social resilience factor by developing real-time monitoring and response capabilities, as well as through public information on disinformation techniques and vectors. The «battle» is not yet won, but the balance of forces has improved considerably”.*

**Professor Corneliu Bjola, EURACTIV Romania interview,  
March 2018**



In order to understand the vulnerabilities of the public it was important to analyze the attitude and perception of the information sources. The research has targeted Romanian and Moldovan citizens from Romania and the Republic of Moldova\*.

## Online questionnaire on disinformation phenomenon and the relationship between East and West

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### What is the level of trust of the Romanian public in sources of information?

**39%** of respondents trust the sources they consulted

**38%** have a neutral attitude towards information sources

**9%** trust very much the sources they use

**4%** do not trust at all

### To what extent is the information verified by the Romanian public?

**13%** verify the articles only when news headlines appear suspicious

**30%** only when the news is important

**36%** verify the news all the time

\*The data was obtained following two online consultations launched by [euractiv.ro](http://euractiv.ro) and [report.md](http://report.md) for assessing the perception of the disinformation phenomenon and the relationship between East and West on the European continent. The consultation gathered 800 responses (507 from Romania and 293 from the Republic of Moldova). Complete data is available here:

<https://www.report.md/esential/Aveam-incredere-in-ceea-ce-citim-Relatia-dintre-Vest-si-Est-din-perspectiva-cititorilor-online-847>

### The topics most affected by fake news and disinformation

topics related to internal affairs  
 international topics (including USA, Russian Federation, EU)  
 economy  
 justice

### What is the level of trust of the Moldovan public in sources of information?

**46%** of respondents have an indefinite attitude  
**36%** trust the information sources they use  
**18%** do not trust the sources they use

### To what extent is the information verified by the Moldovan public

**32%** check the information regardless of the situation  
**25%** check only when the news is important  
**22%** only when the title appears suspicious

### The topics most affected by fake news and disinformation

the internal policy of the Republic of Moldova  
 the relationship with the Russian Federation  
 economic development  
 justice

## Propaganda and disinformation – economy

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Therefore, the economic area is one of the targets of disinformation, especially because public mistrust can easily be fueled. The Republic of Moldova is more exposed as it has a fragile economy and the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were booming between 2015-2016. There were almost half a million small and medium-sized enterprises in the Republic of Moldova in 2015 accounting for over 97% of all business at national level\*. The SMEs sector is also one of the largest employers - more than half of the country's workforce is engaged in this kind of business\*\*.

Recent analyzes show which fears are most often exploited in the Republic of Moldova, especially by Russian propaganda.

"In the case of the Republic of Moldova, propaganda and disinformation address the nostalgic feelings of the population towards the *glory age* of the MSSR, idealizing the image of the state. (...) the most important narratives of disinformation are presented as follows: 1) the Republic of Moldova is a poor and powerless country, manipulated by the West; 2) the European vector is wrong and will fail; 3) Moldova's security is linked to Russia, and NATO is destabilizing the situation; 4) active discreditation of the unionist project which is presented as a threat to the statehood of the Republic of Moldova."\*\*\*

A number of portals and sources of information, including mainstream, but especially those supported by Moscow, feed the audience with fears and frequently present alarmist situations:

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\* *Investing in SMEs in the Eastern Partnership. Moldova - Country report, Country overview - overall presentation of the SMEs sector*, May 2017, p. 10, available at: [http://www.eu4business.eu/files/medias/country\\_report\\_moldova.pdf](http://www.eu4business.eu/files/medias/country_report_moldova.pdf)

\*\*Idem, p. 11

\*\*\*Nicolae Tibrigan, *Strategic priorities of the Russian informational war in Romania and the Republic of Moldova*, May, 17, 2017, available at: <http://securitatesianaliza.ro/2017/05/17/larics-prioritati-strategice-ale-razboiului-informational-rus-in-romania-si-republica-moldova/>

**“Moldova put on sale, who are the new masters”\*** - an article about the privatization of some Moldovan companies.

**“Moldova - a new colony on the outskirts of the European Union” - „While everyone is revolted and looks preoccupied with the billion stolen by corrupt politicians, tens of billions are being stolen under our nose. Foreign capital sucks the sap of the national economy and pumps it abroad.”\*\***

Some recent analyzes and fact-checking show that the economic area is a target for fake news.

**“The Sputnik agency's Romanian version for the Republic of Moldova tries to exemplify in an article just before the May 1st mini-holiday, the great friendship between Russia and the citizens of the Republic between Prut and Nistru.” \*\*\***

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\*Moldova put on sale. Who are the new masters?, March 31, 2017, available at:  
<https://sputnik.md/economics/20170331/11926186/moldova-scoasa-de-vanzare-cine-sunt-noii-stapani.html>

\*\*Cezar Salagor, Moldova - a new colony on the outskirts of the European Union, July 12, 2017 available at: [https://sputnik.md/authors/cezar\\_salagor/](https://sputnik.md/authors/cezar_salagor/)

\*\*\* Sputnik is also lying when talking about tourism. Where the Russians go in May, LARICS, available at: [adev.ro/pbg9tp](http://adev.ro/pbg9tp)

# CONTEXT

The report and the documentation process are part of the project aimed at understanding and combating anti-Western propaganda. The initiative is supported by the German Marshall Fund and has pursued the study and promotion of private economic development and innovation cases that have been positively influenced by the relationship with the Western world.

The materials were documented by Lilia Zaharia, Violeta Coleşnic, Elena Covalenco and Vitalie Călugăreanu and are available on: [www.report.md](http://www.report.md) and on [www.euractiv.ro](http://www.euractiv.ro).

The editorial coordination of this report was provided by Bianca Toma, director of the Romanian Center for European Policies and the editorial team of EURACTIV.ro.

## How do Moldovan entrepreneurs see the influence of the West?

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Report.md spoke with entrepreneurs from local Moldovan communities about the small businesses they started and developed. Each entrepreneur was also asked about the influence the East or West had on his work and his family, the decision to start the business and make changes to the community.

### **Where would Moldova be if it distanced itself from the West?**

**NICOLAE DRĂGAN:**  
**Moldovan wood waste, turned into money with the help of the EU**



*I think we would have now been as poor as some African countries if the EU and the US did not help us. The state does not offer any chance of developing small and medium-sized businesses - this role has been taken up almost entirely by external donors and Moldovans working abroad.*

“

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## THE ZLATOV BROTHERS FROM BAŞCALIA make Moldovan bees the stars in Europe



“

*I do not know where Moldova would have been (if it would stand away from the West) but we would not be here anymore for sure. The point of our effort is to penetrate the EU market. If politicians move us away from the EU and we fail, there is no point to continue.*

*(Tudor Zlatov )*

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*I'm afraid to think of what would have been if we did not catch the European train. Moldova is developing slowly. Slowly, but it's growing. They are stealing a lot in this country. Corruption is everywhere. Even in our village - wherever you go – they stay and expect us to pay. They believe that we are rolling in the dough.*

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## MIHAIL SAVA, a producer of wine served with lyrics



“

*We would go back (if Moldova would stand away from the West). We would stagnate. Moldova is small. Budget money are stolen and if we distance ourselves from the EU, I think we would all escape from here because we would have no more resources.*

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## DOINA IZMAN, the girl with big plans for the rabbit farm

**ANASTASIA FROM  
BĂLĂNEŞTI**  
and the cheese  
from the sheepfold  
with solar panels



*Distancing the West? In this case, we would witness a national drama. I do not think we can afford to turn again. Nobody would stay here.*



*I think we would have starving people. The little we have is due to resources coming from abroad - no matter if they come as support for a business or Moldovans working abroad. If we are closed in a fold - we die.*

**CHIRINCIUC SPOUSES,**  
producers of pasta and  
ravioli with love for  
the village

**ALA LERNER,**  
the teacher  
in luxury  
underwear



*If politicians would do that, they would have no citizens.  
Too many have already left, too many have seen what prosperity means. People will not accept that.*

# ENTREPRENEURS PROFILES & Investments for communities

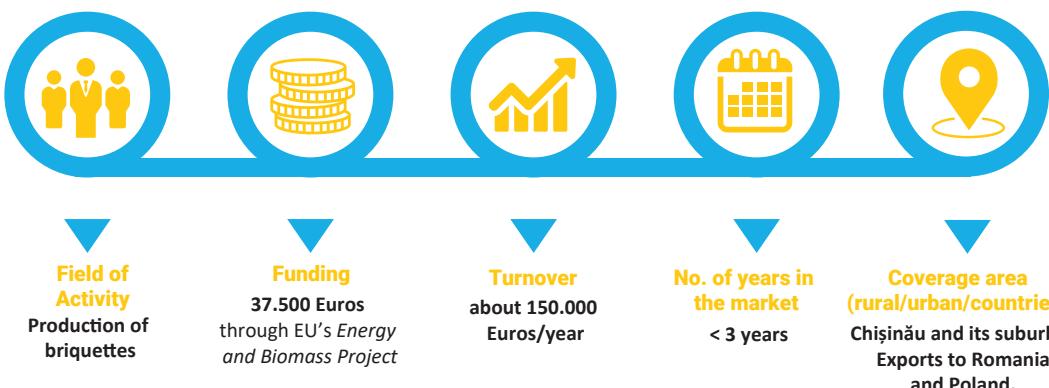
# Nicolae Drăgan, biofuel business

## Moldovan wood waste, turned into money with the help of the EU funds



The biofuel was very little used by Moldovans until 2010. After the EU began to invest in energy alternatives in Moldova, the first businesses in the field appeared, and, according to Report.md, there are now over 100 such initiatives - small factories producing briquettes and pellets. Report.md talked to Nicolae Drăgan, the entrepreneur who started a biofuel business near Colonița, 7 km away from Chișinău.

<https://www.report.md/economie/Gunoil-lemnos-din-Moldova-transformat-in-bani-cu-ajutorul-UE-818>



### About the business

"We are stepping on money. Why not to materialize the garbage that we have? We got 750,000 Lei support from the EU's Energy and Biomass Project. I invested the money in equipment. Now we export to Romania, but we also exported to Poland for a while. We export over 400 tons of biofuel per year. Yes, I was helped by Europeans, and now I help them too. I take our garbage to Europeans.", said the business owner, Nicolae Drăgan

### About the Republic of Moldova

"Our young people are leaving, Moldova is left without labor force and it is serious. Workers who really want to grow professionally need to be understood, you need to talk to them and ensure a decent salary. You cannot deceive people." - Nicolae Drăgan

### **The role of the West in business development?**

*“First of all, the financial support. The company had no equipment. I had to buy everything.”*  
 - Nicolae Drăgan

### **What does the West mean to you?**

*“For me personally it was a rescue. After my business partner left me, I should have closed the company because I had no money to develop it. But the EU helped me and I managed to start on my own.”*  
 - Nicolae Drăgan

### **The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

*„I think we would have now been as poor as some African countries if the EU and the US did not help us. The state does not offer any chance of developing small and medium-sized businesses - this role has been taken up almost entirely by external donors and Moldovans working abroad.”*  
 - Nicolae Drăgan

### **Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

*“Russia has not given Moldovans any ruble for over 26 years. We do not have many factories. We do not have natural resources. Without external support we have no chance.”* - Nicolae Drăgan

### **Where do entrepreneurs inform for their businesses?**

*„Mostly on the internet - I also promote my business on the Internet. I can not invest in the advertisement. Russians do not have a very developed briquetting business. They have coal and don't worry. On Romanian websites you can find important information.”* - Nicolae Drăgan



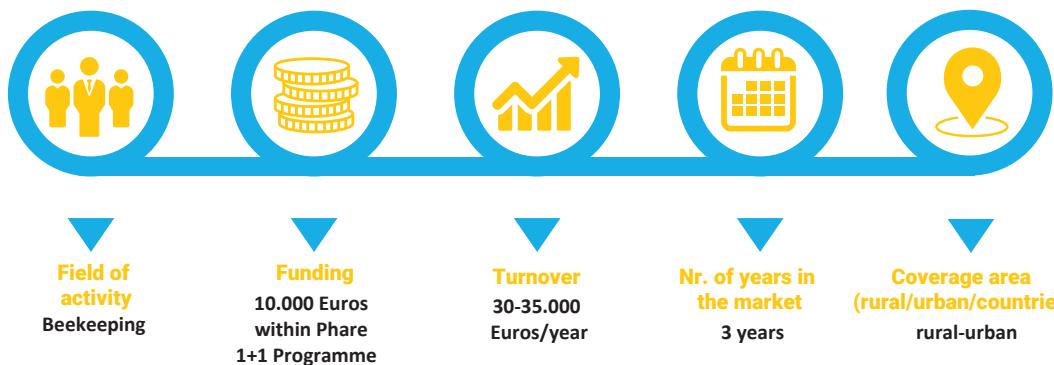
# The Zlatov Brothers from Bașcălia make Moldovan bees the stars in Europe



Mihai and Tudor Zlatov brothers from Bașcălia village, Basarabeasca district, 118 km away from Chișinău, developed two small businesses in beekeeping with inspiration from the family, experience from the West, European and American funds. They applied to the 1 + 1 Pare Programme and received 200,000 Lei, spent on honey machinery. Some of the funds were used for increasing the number of bees: they bought 200 apiaries and one hundred bee families. Recently, the Zlatov brothers have received vertical apiaries, a donation through an American project, USAID Agricultural Performance in Moldova. They plan to

increase their sales in the Republic of Moldova and know that they still have to explain to consumers the benefits of honey, but they hope to soon reach the European market as well.

<https://www.report.md/economie/Albinele-de-la-Bascalia-se-vor-vedete-in-Europa-853>



## About the business

„My purpose is to educate the society how to consume honey. Honey is used very little in Moldova. In Germany, for example, the consumption of honey is 7 kg per capita. In Moldova people buy honey only when they cough and their throat hurts.” - Tudor Zlatov

“I hope we can get a direct contract with Italian partners. We collaborate with a beekeeper from Italy. We hope to send there a lot of 20 tons of honey soon. Officially, we are not exporting. But we have requests from Italy. We would like to build a warehouse for collecting honey. I think it is a project for the next spring.” - Tudor Zlatov

## What does the West mean to you?

“If to think logically, it's not very hard to figure out who our friends are. The Russians have driven our apples with a bulldozer, while the EU welcomed us and gave us a chance. In principle, I don't make any effort to bring our honey to the Russians. It's a market that blackmails.” - Mihai Zlatov

### **The role of the West in business development?**

“Well, they gave us money without asking for anything. Look, work! 200,000 Lei. Especially in the beginning phase, when you count every Lei. That means a lot.” - Tudor Zlatov

### **The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

“It seems to me that the impact is small, because the EU does not boast of it. Does work and does not boast of it. Our government is like that - it is apparently pro-EU, but it does nothing to promote the messages and what the EU does in Moldova. Instead, Dodon flatters Moldovans with Russia's «generosity» on all televisions. And Moldovans believe him.” - Tudor Zlatov

### **Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

“I do not know where Moldova would have been (if it would stand away from the West) but we would not be here anymore for sure. The point of our effort is to penetrate the EU market. If politicians move us away from the EU and we fail, there is no point to continue”.” - Tudor Zlatov

### **Sources of information related to your business?**

„Google knows everything.” - Mihai Zlatov

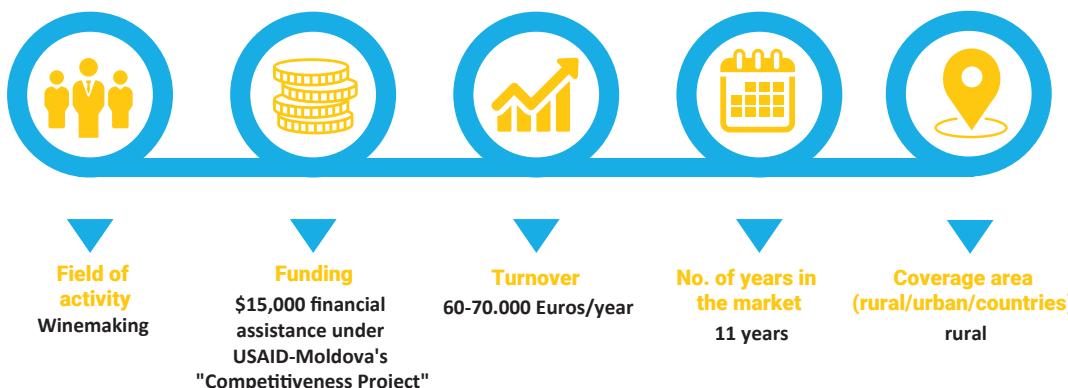


# Mihail Sava, a producer of wine served with lyrics



The embargo imposed by Russia on Moldovan producers was felt on the wine market where most entrepreneurs needed significant investments to reach the European market. In response, the EU opened the market to Moldovan wines before the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement. And with the help of external partners, notes Report.md, Moldovans learned how to promote their wines. So is the story of Mihail Sava, a wine producer from Costesti, who managed to obtain American funds for business development.

<https://www.report.md/economie/Mustuit-in-versuri-846>



## About the business

Mihail Sava started the business in 2007, one of the driest year, according to Report.md. Until 2011, Mr. Sava produced sweet wines, then he concentrated its production on dry wines. Mihail Sava adds an original note to his products: most producers write on labels details about wine production, planting area and vineyard location. On Mr. Sava's bottles of wine, there are poems written by him. „We purchased a refrigeration unit that keeps the temperature between 14 and 16 degrees. At 20 degrees, fermentation begins and the wine loses its flavor. Stainless steel barrels were also purchased out of this money. Can you see this room? Here's the tasting room. It was also arranged from the project money.” - Mihail Sava

## What does the West mean to you?

“It represents the future, freedom, and equal conditions for everybody.” - Mihail Sava

**The role of the West in business development?**

"Thanks to the support I have received from them, my family is united and here, at home, and we are working together for our small business." - Mihail Sava

**The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

"I'm afraid to think of what would have been if we did not catch the European train. Moldova is developing slowly. Slowly, but it's growing. They are stealing a lot in this country. Corruption is everywhere. Even in our village - wherever you go – they stay and expect us to pay. They believe that we are rolling in the dough." - Mihail Sava

**Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

"If that were to happen, I think we would be a big Transnistria - a forgotten area of the world, a museum of the USSR." - Mihail Sava

**Sources of information related to your business?**

"From everywhere. I read on both Romanian and Russian websites. The daughter reads on those in English. Information about vineyard is not politics." - Mihail Sava



FOTO: Report.md

# Doina Izman

has big plans for the rabbit farm  
that listens to rock



FOTO: Report.md

Doina Izman eagerly waited to reach the majority. And not for a party or a special gift. But to get a credit to start her own business, in Trebujeni, Orhei district, 60 km away from Chișinău. Now she has 200 rabbits, and when Report.md journalists visited her, they were greeted in Doina's farm with rock music. «Rabbits listen to music. Because they are scared», Doina explained to the reporters. She's only 19 and for her the West has been a unique occasion. And for the Republic of Moldova? A new way of thinking.

<https://www.report.md/economie/Ferma-iepurilor-care-asculta-rock-820>



Field of activity  
Rabbits growth

Funding  
10,000 Euros  
within PARE 1+1  
Programme

Turnover  
15.000 Euros/year

No. of years in  
the market  
3 years

Coverage area  
(rural/urban/countries)  
rural

## About the business

*"It was very difficult for me to start the business, because nobody wanted to help me. Even those from the village mayor's office helped me with difficulty. Wherever I was addressing, I was not helped. I was told I had to bring a document, but they did not tell me where to address to take the document. Finally, in August 2016, with the support of the PARE 1 + 1 Programme, managed by ODIMM, I obtained a grant of 200,000 Moldovan Lei (equivalent to 10,000 Euros)." - Doina Izman*

## What does the West mean to you?

*"It means my Dad. He's still there, far away. He is working." - Doina Izman*

**The role of the West in business development?**

*"The West helped us with money to open this business. I do not think we could have covered all our needs." - Doina Izman*

**The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

*"I can not tell you about the community. There has been little change in our village. At the country level - it awakened us! We think differently. Not everybody, but more than half of citizens woke up and think." - Doina Izman*

**Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

*"We would go back. We would stagnate. Moldova is small. Budget money are stolen and if we distance ourselves from the EU, I think we would all escape from here because we would have no more resources." - Doina Izman*

**Sources of information related to your business?**

*"I'm part of the Facebook generation. The Internet is my source of information. I read in Romanian and English." - Doina Izman*



FOTO: Report.md

# Anastasia from Bălănești and the cheese from the sheepfold with solar panels



FOTO: Report.md

Anastasia Adam is the only woman in Moldova with a sheepfold. "And not any one, but located on the highest hill in Moldova, equipped with a wind turbine, solar panels, greensward and surrounded by forest", writes report Report.md. After the first year of sheep farming, Anastasia encountered many difficulties. She was not sure she made the best choice, but after she benefited from a grant and applied for other grants, she saw that everything started working. This summer there are 5 years since its commencement, and the sheepfold became a modern one with a wind turbine and solar panels.

<https://www.report.md/esential/Stana-din-deal-serenadele-lui-Marcel-si-oile-familiste-830>

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Field of activity  
Sheep breeding

Funding  
15,000 Euros + ODIM (PARE 1+1 Programme) and three other projects plus 40% own investment

Turnover  
40,000 Euros/year

No. of years in the market  
5 years

Coverage area (rural/urban/countries)  
rural

## About the business

"During one year I have tried to register sheep cheese as a product, but because there is no technological process for this product, it is very complicated. To crown it all, the elaboration of this technological process is equally complicated! Wherever I was going, I was just told: „Yes, yes, we will do“. I even tried through the Sheep and Goat Breeders Association and I did not manage either." - Anastasia Adam

"If we would ever close the business, that would only happen because of the lack of employees. I just manage to do their papers and they leave. People in the village receive social welfare (...). Young families, in power, receive about 3,200 Lei monthly allowance. «How come, I stay at home and earn 3,200 a month and if I come to you, I work the whole month and earn 2,500?!»" - Anastasia Adam

## What does the West mean to you?

"Clear rules of play and stability - a safe market that allows you to plan your budget and to grow." - Anastasia Adam

**The role of the West in business development?**

*"All the money that we invested in this business came from the West. Even our investment - we also earned the money in the EU." - Anastasia Adam*

**The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

*"I know a lot of small and medium-sized businesses that emerged and survive only because of the money coming from abroad. The state does not help you, but it suffocates you with taxes and bureaucracy." - Anastasia Adam*

**Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

*"In this case, we would witness a national drama. I do not think we can afford to turn again. Nobody would stay here." - Anastasia Adam*

**Sources of information related to your business?**

*"The Internet. Including the projects I applied to, I also learned about them on the internet."*  
- Anastasia Adam



# Chirinciuc Spouses – producers of pasta and ravioli with love for the village



**Maria and Sergiu Chirinciuc worked 17 years in Italy and returned to Carpineni, almost 70 km away from Chișinău, where they make delicious Italian pasta with local raw material. They invested the money and experience gained in the EU, to which they managed to add a grant aimed to Moldovan entrepreneurs. They speak with so much love of the village, that they have kept it in their brand.**

<https://www.report.md/economie/Ravioli-cu-dragoste...-de-sat-855>



Field of activity  
Public food service

Funding  
10,000 Euros within  
PARE 1+1 Programme

Turnover  
100,000 Euros/year

No. of years  
in market  
3 years

Coverage area  
(rural/urban/countries)  
rural

## About the business

„17 years of sacrifice. This is the investment I made with my husband here. We also obtained a 200,000 Lei grant from PARE 1 + 1 Programme, from which we purchased a car with refrigerator to deliver the products.” - Maria Chirinciuc

„The dough is prepared after a typical Italian recipe. In Italy, Sergiu worked in this area, so the preparation technology is entirely Italian. Meat, eggs and labor force are «made in Moldova», but the technology is Italian.” - Maria Chirinciuc

## What does the West mean to you?

“Stability and prosperity, but also tears of yearning. I left there 17 years of tears.”  
- Maria Chirinciuc

### **The role of the West in business development?**

"We started our business on our money. Through PARE 1+1 Programme we only purchased the car with refrigerator. We were short of money and we applied to this project." - Maria Chirinciuc

### **The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

"There are many projects implemented in our village with the European support. Even the town hall has won several projects related to water supply, road repairs. For the country - I think it would be more beneficial for the EU to support particular projects and not through the government, because the money is being stolen there." - Maria Chirinciuc

### **Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

"I think we would have starving people. The little we have is due to resources coming from abroad - no matter if they come as support for a business or Moldovans working abroad. If we are closed in a stole, we die." - Maria Chirinciuc

### **Sources of information related to your business?**

"As for the business, we came well prepared from Italy. We knew everything. But with regard to the market, the customers - we use the internet." - Maria Chirinciuc



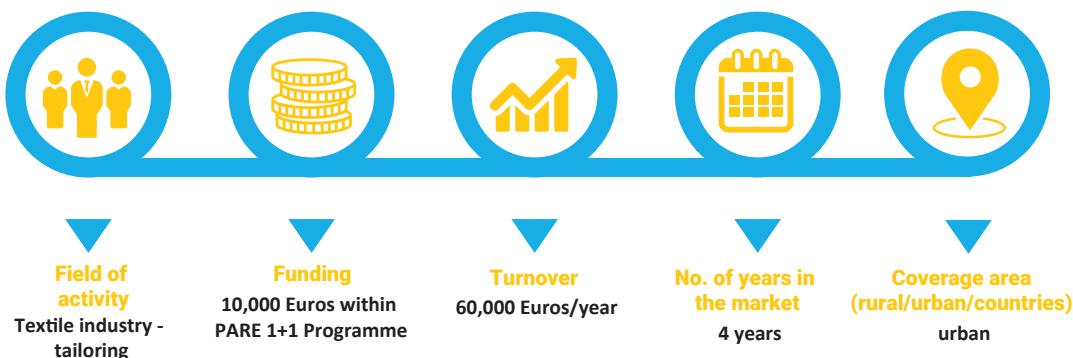
# Ala Lerner - the teacher in luxury underwear

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A teacher of history with passion for fashion design (and a graduation diploma at a Moscow school) decided to start a business, after 18 years of pedagogy. "She changed the lecture chair on a sewing machine table, entering into history as the first producer of luxury underwear in Moldova", notes Report.md, in a visit to Ala Lerner's studio. How did her business grow? First victory: one project within Pare 1+1 Programme. Then a grant of 200,000 lei - which meant investments in equipment. Promotion and marketing are very important, so that Ala managed to work on branding, with the support of a third grant from USAID. And she does not stop here.

<https://www.report.md/economie/Profesoara-in-lenjerie-de-lux-Istoria-unei-afaceri-838>



## About the business

"We go further, from programme to programme, because it is a very expensive business. In other countries, start-ups have many facilities: in the first three years of their activity they are exempt from paying taxes, for example. We pay a 35% tax on the cost of the goods at customs clearance, namely lingerie accessories. That is why, in the Republic of Moldova, many businessmen fail even in the first year of their activity. Expenditure is great, and it would be good to have some facilities in the first years of our activity, to have some facilities at customs clearance, at export of goods and import of raw materials." - Ala Lerner

## What does the West mean to you?

"A huge and stable market." - Ala Lerner

**The role of the West in business development?**

*"They helped us with money when it was our hardest time: at the beginning. Now we are trying to take advantage of the market and to export." - Ala Lerner*

**The impact of the West on your community and on the Republic of Moldova?**

*"We are dependent on the West. There are over two decades in which we have developed some relationships. To interrupt everything now - I find it foolish." - Ala Lerner*

**Where do you think Moldova would be if its elected officials decided to stand away from the West?**

*"If the politicians would do that, they would have no citizens. Too many have already left, too many have seen what prosperity means. People will not accept that." - Ala Lerner*

**Sources of information related to your business?**

*"The Internet. We're also peeking at Russian market - they have something specific about our business segment, something that catches the European market." - Ala Lerner*



FOTO: Report.md

# Three kilometers of „European” light

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**After 35 years of darkness on the streets, the street lighting system at Scoreni was modernized in 2017. 80 LEDs were installed on pillars - devices that consume five times less than traditional bulbs and with about 15 years “lifetime”.**

<https://www.report.md/economie/Lumina-pentru-oameni%E2%80%A6-indiferent-de-carnetul-de-partid-827>

## Funding

Grant provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, through the Migration and Local Development Project, implemented by UNDP-Moldova. 20,000 Euro were provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and 10,500 Euro were gathered from diaspora contributions.

## Community Voices

“Since the Europeans have put light on the pillar, we are kind of seen by those from Chișinău”, says aunt Chilina from Scoreni

“It is good that we have light. Until now, it was frightening at night on the road. We were like in the vampire movies”, says Sergiu Croitoru, a 9th grade student from the theoretical high school “The Universe”

“Since those from Chișinău stole the billion, the Europeans do not give them any money. They give us, the people in the villages, they help us, the poor, not those who are stealing money”, says aunt Chilina

# “Thank goodness” for the water



**More than 11,000 people from ten localities in the Soroca and Florești rayons will have clean water at the taps after the construction of aqueducts.**

<https://www.report.md/economie/Bogadaproste-pentru-apsoara-833>

## Funding

150,000 Euros provided by the Swiss through the National Fund for Regional Development (FNDR).

## Work

The construction of the aqueduct in 10 localities in Soroca and Florești rayons.

## Community Voices

„Almost everyone has small wells in their yards, but the water is hard, with stone. If I leave the water for a few days in the bucket, you should see how much stone is there. But the water from this well is very good”, says aunt Olga Tamazlîcaru from Bahrinești village, Florești rayon

„We are so lucky. We will have tap water like the townspeople.”, believes Sergiu Plugaru

# The Mobile Team: „Hope Providers at Home”

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FOTO: Report.md

**The Social Service „The Mobile Team” is intended for people with severe disabilities, especially serious cases are selected, where there is increased risk of abandonment and institutionalization of the child. The service provides therapeutic, logopedic, psychological, social assistance and kinetotherapy at the patients' home.**

<https://www.report.md/esential/Furnizori-de-speranta-la-domiciliu-843>



## Funding

EU-funded project through Keystone Moldova -  
15,000 Euros, a car, teaching tools and computers



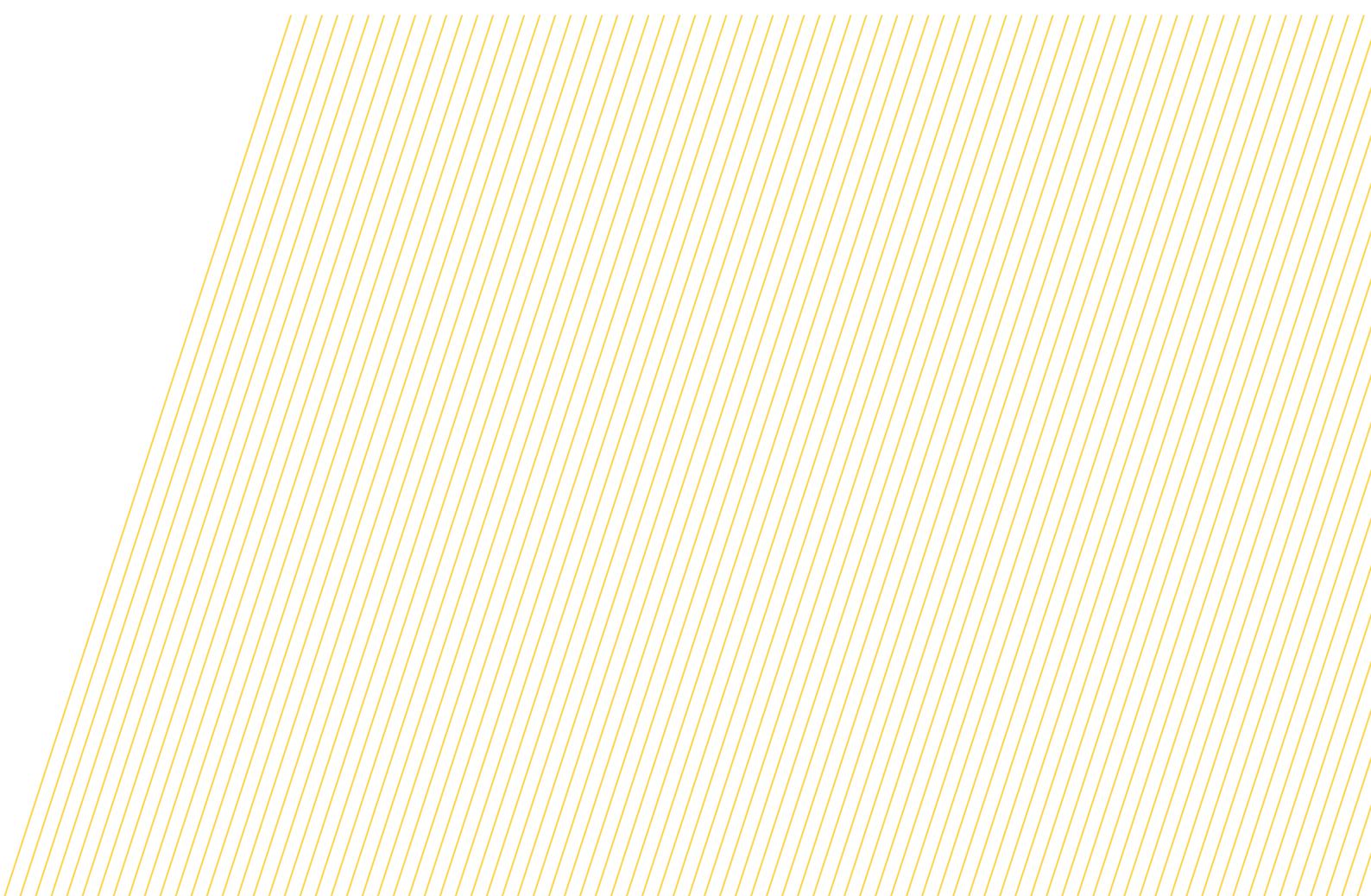
## Work

Social Service „Mobile Team”  
(helping the children with special needs)



## Community voices

„Every beneficiary of the mobile team is included in this service for a period of 12 months. Until now, Adrian did not benefit from homeschooling at all, he is blind, so we teach him to perceive the world around him by touching. (...) Because he says he sees some shadows, we have scheduled a consultation for him, at a specialized center, to determine if he has the chance to see at least the day light. If so, then we will search for financial sources to make the surgery possible.” says Cristina Ciubuc, from the “Mobile team”, Căușeni





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