

ANNEX E. SOCIOLOGICAL POLL WITHIN THE PROJECT "STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPMENT". RÉSUMÉ

The sociological polling conducted within the UNDP/WB project "Strategy for Development" was aimed to learn about the people's reaction to the social and economic reforms initiated in 1990s, the reforms' efficiency, the development trends of the country, as well as the expectations of the interviewed for the near future.

The current social and economic situation of the Republic of Moldova is complicated to the same extent like in other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe. Its improvement cannot be achieved without the conscious support of all social groups. Efforts in this direction have been made, but the achieved positive results are relative due to various reasons. The taken actions bear considerable risk, if further positive results are not achieved, the distrust in economic policy forecasting at the level of both economic agents and population will grow up. Or, there is only one step to the diminution of the many people's trust in the success of economic reforms.

The year 1998 is expected to be a year of positive changes. It's extremely important that people feel the positive changes and participate in their achievements. Every future project should take this into account when working out or correcting the social and economic policies related to the development.

In this view the working group "Applied Sociology" within the Center for Strategic Studies and Reforms held a poll based on a representative sample typical for the Republic of Moldova, aimed at supplying relevant information which could be used in the elaboration of the future development strategy.

The polling was conducted among 1263 individuals in cities Chișinău, Bălți and in 18 raions (November 1997), and resulted in the following conclusions:

I. The economic situation of the surveyed households

In 1996 the revenues from work as well as those obtained from selling agricultural products increased. Besides the expenditures grew up especially after the increase in electricity and fuel tariffs.

The difference between revenues and expenditures is minimal and shows an extremely low feasibility to save.

A considerable part of the population (97% of workers financed from the state budget, 97.4% of state employees, 52.5% specialists with university degrees, and 86.1% of managers of state agencies) are under the "consumer basket of goods" limit considered as the verge of poverty.

This points to the fact that the budget based workers are in a difficult situation, the same can be said about the state financed employees. As concerns the pensioners, they are in an extremely difficult economic situation.

This picture can be completed by additional data. For example, the families of unemployed represent 15%-18% of the total labor force. These families should not only be taken into account, but a special research about them is needed. Families getting salaries from budgetary institutions (teachers, doctors, etc.), which do not receive their salaries in time due to the economic and

financial crisis of the Republic of Moldova should also be included in this category. Since these social and professional categories don't have other revenues sources, they become economically vulnerable.

The retired people are in the most critical situation, they have low pensions, they do not get them regularly, they are remunerated against goods that cannot be exchanged with other goods or services. According to the data from the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, the arrears with pensions and subsidies for the first 9 months of 1997 were reduced 1.9 times and made up 168.4 million lei. The biggest share in the total arrears are: for 1996 (37%), 28% as of September, 26 as of August, and 9% as of July, 1997. The pensioners' families become economically vulnerable from the initial stage.

II. As regards the economic situation of the interviewed families, the interviewed have a reduced degree of satisfaction. This can be seen from the final results, the average by localities and national minorities. Among all interviewed families 49.2% consider themselves "medium ensured", 41.3% consider themselves "poor".

The worst picture is expressed by individuals with a scientific degree i.e. 62.5% of them consider themselves as "poor", and only 37.5% think they are "medium ensured".

The social and economic situation in the Republic of Moldova is considered "critical" by 52.7% of the interviewed, "unfavorable" by 37.5%, and only 1.8% of the interviewed consider it "favorable".

Of all interviewed individuals from Chiinău and Bălți 68.5% consider the situation as "critical", and 21.9% consider as "unfavorable"; 87.5% of scientific researchers consider it as "critical", and 12.5% think it is "unfavorable".

The problems that the interviewed are deeply concerned about: delayed payments of salaries/pensions – 16.8%, increase of prices – 14.6%, distrust in near future – 13.6%, unemployment – 12.7%, low social protection – 10.6%.

III. On the results of reforms in Moldova

1. Appreciation of some aspects of the reform:

The occurrence of different property forms

Two aspects draw our attention: a) individuals which state that "in many cases the reforms bring negative results" (37.7%); b) individuals which abstain or say they don't know the answer (35.8% of all interviewed, 45.1% of whom are individuals with incomplete secondary education, and 57% of the individuals with secondary education).

The most positive appreciation is that of the young people (students – 46.5% are positive and 3.14% are very positive which makes 49.6% in total), people with university education – 57%, workers involved in the private sector -57.4%, and private sector employees – 42.1%.

On restructuring the state enterprises

The appreciation of these measures is made with prudence and reserve, doubled by a state of minimal satisfaction. The results show that 31.9% of the interviewed consider the restructuring state enterprises "neither satisfactory, nor unsatisfactory", 28.8% consider it "positive", and only 7.2% consider restructuring "very positive". The quality of appreciation depends upon the

educational level of the interviewed. Thus, among individuals with incomplete secondary education 51.6% consider restructuring of state enterprises "neither good, nor bad"; among individuals with secondary education 35% have the same opinion, whereas the opinions of individuals with university degrees and scientific degrees are predominantly positive.

On prices and trade liberalization, the liquidation of the goods deficit, the stability of national currency and the development of private sector, the majority of the interviewed expressed a positive opinion.

As regards the liquidation of kolkhozes and sovkhozes, probably due to the difficulties faced in agriculture during the transition to the market economy, as well as due to the persistence of the old model of farms and the dependence of the majority of the population upon this model, and under circumstances of evident impediment of those who plead for another form of agricultural ownership and farming, the reaction of the interviewed was predominantly negative.

The majority of the interviewed were positive about the ***creation of individual enterprises, privatization of housing facilities, the right to initiative and profit making.***

2. What about are the interviewed concerns the implementation of reforms in the Republic of Moldova

- "The lack of an integral reforms program developed in a close collaboration between the President of the Republic, the Parliament and the Government" (22.6%).
- "the lack of a precise and well detailed policy for the industrial, agricultural and entrepreneurial activity" (19.2%).
- "the lack of a state program regarding the employment" (12%).

3. Shadow economy can be reduced – in the opinion of the interviewed – by juridical means (40.8%), by administrative ways (32.6%), and by economic methods (25.4%).

4. Concerning the share of the state property in different sectors of the national economy we can declare that the range of answers is very wide, from one economic sector to another, as well as from the social status of an interviewed to another.

IV. Rural population on the agrarian reform

About 16% of the interviewed founded individual farms during privatization process. If we consider the "collective farm" =kolkhoz= to be a joint stock company, than 62,40% are of that type.

The changes caused by privatization in agriculture brought both, positive and negative aspects. The positive ones require: positive attitude towards land (56,71%) and interests in work (52,86 %). As for the negative ones, there is a need for fuel (70,33%), enough work equipment (69,72%) and fertilizer (65,85%) provision.

The average revenues obtained from agricultural activity in 1996 made up 296,43 lei per person; the expenses made up 113,72 lei; in the first 10 months of the 1997 the revenues per person made up 248,18 lei, but the expenses – 113,8 lei.

The amount of the "revenues from agriculture" and the revenues from non agrarian activities was a positive surprise.

V. On enterprises and its administration

The issues that the enterprises face in accordance with the opinions expressed by the interviewed:

– high tariffs on energy resources, raw materials, supplies	28%
– lack of funds	28%
– fuel and electricity supply	23%
– thefts from enterprises	16%
– difficulties in the evaluation of goods	14%

Who could improve the situation of the enterprises the interviewers are hired.

The state and its agencies occupy the first place (32,15%), closely followed by “private farmer” (24,52%) and “administration” (17,49%).

There are some defaults that we are perceptible to understand on one hand about the enterprise situation, human relations issues, qualification, discipline, etc., and on the other hand the enterprise relations with other enterprises involved in the market economy.

VI. On entrepreneurship

The interviewed consider the conditions for Antreprenariat development as unfavorable. The predominant uncertainty in this field is caused by the economic conditions (taxes, leasing, etc.), as well as property and personal protection.

The desire for earn more and work independently made them to start entrepreneurial activity.

As concerns to ”what impedes the entrepreneurial development”, the “huge taxes” takes the first place – (by 30,43%), followed by “no support and protection from the state” (27,18%). Here we can add cases of corruption of the state agencies employees (51,54%) and the activity of “criminal services” (26,28%).

VII. Problems faced by the Republic of Moldova for a long time

The most important current tasks – the interviewed opinion about “economic development, improvement the living standards” (48,82%), followed by “the state strengthening, introducing order in the country” (27,73).

The major risk of the economic sector represents “the large foreign debt”, (24,66%), the second comes the “destruction of the industrial and technical/scientific potential” (21,23%).

To overcome the crisis, the interviewed think that Moldova needs more “than 10 years” (48,32%).

For the investor support “granted material advantages to individuals creating new jobs and hiring the unemployed” (29,22%), “long term loans under favorable conditions” (24,34%), doubled by “improving the financial-banking policy” (22,5%) are required.

In order to support the producer the interviewed think, that “special measures for protecting and supporting the producers from the Republic”(46,71%) are needed and “ensuring of a sales market through state order” (30,45%).

Countries with which the Republic of Moldova should develop relations at all levels:

On the whole: the first place is occupied by: economic relations with Russia (16,03%), Romania (14,44%), Japan (13,7%), Germany (12,38%); cultural relations: Romania (15,16%),

Israel (12,46%), Russia (11,63%); political relations: Romania (15,99%) and Russia (15,75%); military relations: Russia (16,42%), Romania (14,82%), USA (11,79%).

Countries represented by zones:

Among the Western developed countries in *economic relations* Germany occupies the first place (58,56%), followed by the USA (35,79%); in cultural relations: the preferred countries are Germany (23,99%) and France (22,28%); for political relations the USA occupy the first place by 40,41%, followed by Germany by 33,01%; in military relations all preferences are given to the USA by 54,99%.

Among the other countries group the options are lineal:

- Among the group of countries from Eastern and Central Europe – Romania is preferred at all levels;
- Among the group of countries from CIS – Russia;
- Among the group of countries from the Far East – Japan;
- Among the group of countries from the Middle East – Israel;

Moldova should integrate at a greater extent with Europe in the following domains, in accordance with the interviewed opinion: economic (86,3%); legal (56,69%); political (52,02%).

The “municipality” residents and the “individuals holding a scientific degree” were in favor of “education and sciences” in the third place (42,86% and respectively 52,94%), but the political field occupied the forth place among “Municipality” residents and the fifth place among the “individuals holding a scientific degree”, but the cultural field occupies in this case the forth place.

As regards to reaching the development level necessary for European integration, the concept that Moldova needs 25 years to reach that level prevails by 56,66%.

VIII. Hopes and confidence in the future

How can we improve the socio -economic situation in the Republic of Moldova? The interviewed think that the legislation should be improved, laws should be applied (66,66%), economic crime should be eradicated (42%) and the industrial enterprises should be restructured (23,34%).

Who can solve the problems in Moldova?

– The management expertise, enterprise and agencies managers	21,90%
– The President of the Republic of Moldova	20,45%
– New entrepreneurs, the private sector	14,90%

As regards to the direction of changes in the material situation of the interviewed families there is an uncertainty: 30,56% abstain, 27,4% stated that “It will be the same”, 21,46% think “that it will get worse” and only 20,52% (i.e. 1 out 5 the interviewed) think that “it will get better”.

Using the experience of this poll and other sociologic polls conducted in the Republic of Moldova we can draw the conclusion, that the population is not well informed about promoted policy. For this purpose, a Government Plan should be elaborated for informing the population about the taken measures to improve the economic and social situation as well as the to carry out the reforms.