Results of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Following the Dniester River Pollution Crisis Presented to the Public

The National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC), in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova and the United Nations, presented the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Report on 16 October 2026, following the oil pollution crisis affecting the Dniester River in the spring of 2026.

The report was prepared using an international methodology developed by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank. This methodology enables the assessment of a crisis’s impact on the population, the economy and public services, as well as the identification of measures required for recovery. This approach aims to restore conditions to their pre-crisis state while identifying solutions to strengthen the preparedness and resilience of communities and institutions in the face of similar situations in the future.

The assessment was conducted by teams from the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the United Nations (UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNEP, UNICEF and UNDRR), the European Union and other partners. The CNMC and UNDP Moldova supported the coordination of the assessment and the application of the methodology, facilitating the collection, verification and consolidation of sectoral data. In total, the exercise brought together approximately 40 representatives from 18 national authorities and institutions, as well as around 10 international experts.

Representatives of the authorities and institutions involved in crisis management, together with development partners, attended the presentation event. Participants discussed the report’s findings and recommendations, action priorities and the conditions required for their implementation.

The report analyses the consequences of the Dniester River pollution following the Russian attack on the Novodnistrovsk Hydroelectric Power Plant in Ukraine. The assessment examines the impact on the population, particularly the temporary disruption of water supplies, as well as the consequences for the environment, public health and agriculture. It also estimates the losses caused by the crisis and identifies the measures needed to restore affected services, reduce risks and improve preparedness for similar situations.

Immediately after the incident, the Republic of Moldova, as a participating state in the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism, requested support from European partners to address the consequences of the Dniester River pollution. Following this request, specialised equipment, personal protective equipment, electric generators and absorbent materials were rapidly mobilised. European satellite imagery services were also activated to monitor the spread of pollution and support the authorities' response efforts.

According to the assessment, the precautionary suspension of water abstraction at Cosăuți, which supplies the water distribution system in the northern part of the country, created a situation that required the rapid mobilisation of authorities to ensure the continuity of drinking and technical water supplies to the population. Approximately 200,000 people were affected or exposed to the risk of water supply disruptions, while around 100,000 temporarily lost access to the centralised water supply system.

During the response, joint efforts by central and local authorities, development partners and businesses resulted in the distribution of more than 620 tonnes of drinking and technical water. Emergency medical services were prioritised and maintained without interruption, while some non-urgent medical services were temporarily rescheduled. In the municipality of Bălți, local authorities decided to temporarily move educational activities online as a measure to adapt to the situation.

At the same time, the crisis highlighted the additional difficulties faced by older people, persons with disabilities, households without access to transport and low-income families. Authorities and social services sought to provide support based on identified needs and available resources.

The incident did not cause damage to infrastructure, buildings or equipment, but generated losses estimated at EUR 2.33 million. These losses primarily reflect response expenditure, additional costs associated with maintaining public services and the impact on the environment.

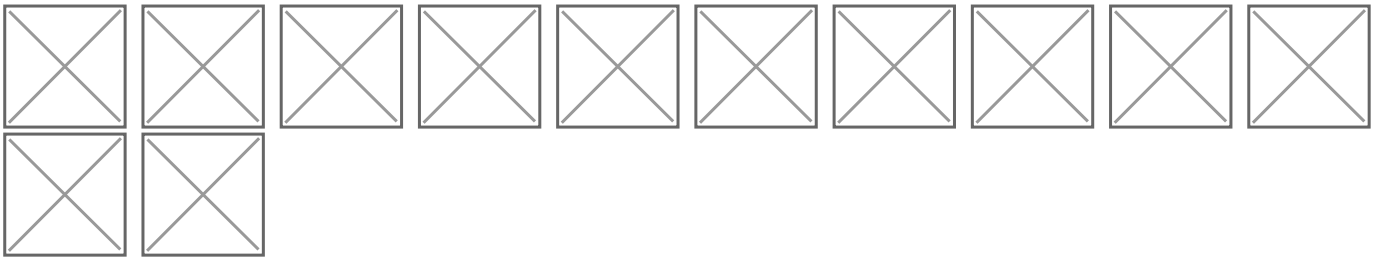
The largest losses were recorded in disaster risk reduction (EUR 1.18 million), followed by the environment (EUR 724,000), water and sanitation (EUR 329,000) and health (EUR 97,000). At the local level, Soroca District was identified as the most affected. The assessment did not identify any measurable macroeconomic effects.

According to the report, the recovery needs identified for the 2026–2031 period primarily concern measures that would enable the Republic of Moldova to prevent and manage similar incidents more effectively. The greatest needs relate to the environmental sector, including improving water quality monitoring, strengthening laboratory capacity, managing contaminated waste and carrying out the interventions necessary to protect the environment. Other needs concern the preparedness and response capacity of the authorities, including replenishing material reserves, equipping response teams with specialised equipment, training personnel and conducting practical exercises.

The report proposes seven priority action packages:
1. Completing environmental monitoring and decontamination where justified.
2. Strengthening the resilience of water supplies through alternative sources and water safety plans.
3. Enabling real-time monitoring and data exchange between institutions.
4. Strengthening cross-border coordination and establishing joint protocols with Ukraine.
5. Enhancing civil protection capacities.
6. Supporting communities and vulnerable people.
7. Restoring ecosystems and ensuring the sustainable management of the Dniester River basin.
The report also recommends establishing a single, coordinated recovery programme, with clearly defined responsibilities for each institution and a common investment register.
The proposals and recommendations put forward during the event will be reviewed and taken into account in finalising the report, which will subsequently be published on the websites of the CNMC and UNDP Moldova.

Going forward, the National Crisis Management Centre will seek to incorporate the assessment findings into national crisis management mechanisms through the following actions:

1. Integrating the findings of the PDNA into the national risk assessment to improve the identification and analysis of vulnerabilities, including cross-border risks, cascading effects and interdependencies between essential services.
2. Using the findings to develop the National Register of Lessons Identified from Crisis Management, documenting the experience gained during the Dniester River crisis and identifying both effective practices and areas requiring improvement.
3. Applying the lessons identified to strengthen institutional preparedness, including through the development of national legislation on business continuity and continuity of government, the identification of alternative solutions for maintaining essential services, and the organisation of inter-institutional exercises.

The CNMC will also continue its dialogue with the responsible institutions and development partners to support the prioritisation of the report’s recommendations and identify opportunities for their implementation, in line with institutional mandates and available resources.

The results of this assessment provide a clearer picture of the vulnerabilities exposed by the Dniester River crisis and the measures that can be improved. The next step is to build on the experience gained and ensure that the lessons identified are reflected in how we prepare, cooperate and respond to crises.