

Road Safety Enforcement and Traffic Policing in Moldova:

Report of the Moldova/Georgia/UK
Police Exchange Programme



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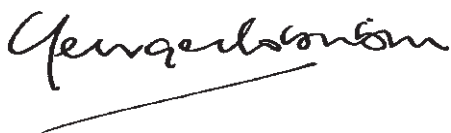
Foreword: Road Safety Enforcement and Traffic Policing in Moldova

Police play a critical role in road safety. Without proper police enforcement, even the most comprehensive legislation on seat belt-wearing, drink-driving, speeding and other risks will fail to have an impact. Enforcement is not a one-off event – Experience shows it must be sustained over time or people fall back into bad habits. Experience also shows the most effective road policing is done working with the public, harnessing the support of local communities for safer roads.

As Chairman of the Commission on Global Road Safety and Patron of EASST, reducing road casualties is a personal priority. But I am also the grandson, son and father of a policeman. I know what an important, challenging and sometimes heart-breaking job the police do. Their vital contribution to road safety must be recognised and valued.

Sadly, it must also be acknowledged that throughout the world problems of police corruption exist. Corruption undermines effective enforcement like a virus which starts small but eventually kills its host. As this report shows, corruption can destroy public support for road policing. It consumes resources and distorts data on road incidents and casualties. The most dangerous accomplice to corruption is indifference, as it allows the problem to grow until there appears to be no solution.

I am very pleased, therefore, to recommend this report and to congratulate the Government of Moldova for the tremendous support they have given to this work. The report points to many areas for reform, and contains recommendations not only for the Government and Police but for the donor community. The next steps will be challenging. I look forward to seeing progress in this vital area where the potential to save lives is so great.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robertson', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

The Rt Hon Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, KT, GCMG, honFRSE, PC
Patron, EASST
Chairman, Commission on Global Road Safety

Introduction

In May and June 2010, at the request of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, a series of exchange visits were organised between specialists on road policing from Moldova, the UK and the Republic of Georgia. The Moldovan government had identified the operation of the Road Police – and in particular problems of corruption and poor enforcement – as a major obstacle to implementing an effective National Road Safety Strategy. They hoped, through the visits, to gain an insight into ways to reform and professionalise the Road Police in Moldova and tackle endemic police corruption.

The exchange began with a visit to Moldova by expert delegations from the UK and Georgia. They met senior police officers, visited the Chisinau police station, were taken around a driver training and vehicle registration centre, and had meetings with a variety of government agencies and departments with an interest in road traffic policing. Similar visits were also conducted in Georgia and the United Kingdom with the inclusion of a delegation from Moldova.

There was a particular interest in learning from the example of the Republic of Georgia. The Georgian anti-corruption strategy was one of the flagship policies of the Rose Revolution. The dramatic sacking of nearly the entire police force and their rapid replacement by a new cadre of young, professional police was reported widely in Moldova as elsewhere. These reports were received with a mixture of hope and scepticism. If accurate, and police corruption had indeed been eradicated, the Georgian example gave hope to other countries and proved that police corruption could be beaten. But there was also scepticism that results of the Georgian anti-corruption strategy may have been exaggerated, or simply might not be transferable.

The visit to the UK was to provide a comparator – an example of a mature democracy where road traffic enforcement is effective and not undermined by bribery. It was hoped the UK might provide an insight into the use of technology in road policing, as well as ideas for road safety enforcement. But while circumstances are different in the UK, the problem of corruption still exists and remains a challenge to UK policing. Delegates from all three countries hoped to learn from each other ways of keeping corruption at bay.

The visits were sponsored by the World Bank Country Office for Moldova, who have played an active role in supporting the Government's National Road Safety Strategy. The programme was organised and part-sponsored by EASST - the Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport - an association of road safety campaigners working in Eastern Europe to save lives and prevent injuries on the roads. The project would not have been possible without the support of the Government of Moldova - in particular the Prime Minister, Minister of State, Foreign Minister, Minister of the Interior and Minister for Information Technologies and Communications – and the cooperation and encouragement of the Minister of Internal Affairs of

Georgia and the UK Police Federation. The project benefitted too from the involvement of RoadPOL, the World Bank's global road policing initiative which aims to promote police engagement in road safety at senior leadership levels, and in doing so, to enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of road policing.

The visit programme has already had an impact on public policy in Moldova. Early results include:

- A new Driver Examination Centre has been opened up by the Ministry of Information Technologies equipped with 25 computers and a video system ensuring real-time broadcast of the examination process on a large screen located in the waiting room.
- The center now has 2 modern cars with cameras to record the examination process during the practical driving test. Each car has 3 cameras: one which films the examiner and the person taking the test; the second filming the road; and the third one, the dashboard. All video recordings are stored for 60 days for later use at the exam.
- At the time of our visit, the only person responsible for the examination process was the Head of the Documentation Department of the respective district. Since 1 September 2010, at least one Committee member from another district will also oversee the exam.

Other reforms introduced by the Government independently of our visit will improve enforcement. The Minister for Internal Affairs has ordered that all traffic police officers must wear name tags on their uniforms so they can be easily identified in case of allegations from the public of bribery or other wrongdoings. The impact of this measure is being followed-up by special assessment teams who stop and interview road-users at random. The decision has also been taken to cancel special number plates for Government, Parliament and Ministries – formerly a source of special privileges – though not yet implemented.

It is recognised that, by necessity, the visits to each country were short and could therefore only provide an indication of where problems lie and where solutions might be found. Our intention in this report is to describe the key areas where reform and support are clearly needed, and to point to issues requiring attention. We include our recommendations later in this report in the knowledge that further work will be needed on a detailed reform programme. Our aim is to begin what we hope will be a longer-term dialogue to improve road safety enforcement and end corruption among road police.

Background: Enforcement and road safety

The Republics of Moldova and Georgia, along with the United Kingdom, are all sponsors of a UN Resolution agreed in March 2010 calling for a Decade of Action on global road safety. The resolution recognises the global burden of road deaths and injuries is rising to crisis levels - particularly in low and middle income countries. If continued unchecked, road deaths and injuries could have severe social and economic consequences and undermine sustainable development.

The UN resolution identifies key risk factors contributing to killer roads including:

“the non-use of safety belts and child restraints, the non-use of helmets, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, inappropriate and excessive speed and the lack of appropriate infrastructure...”¹

Effective policing to tackle these risk factors and ensure safe road behaviour is a critical component of the ‘Safe Systems’ approach to road injury prevention. This recognises that traditional strategies reliant purely on engineering and education have proved to be ineffective unless they are combined with enforcement. It is only through the dynamic combination of the ‘three E’s’ underpinning road safety - Engineering, Education and Enforcement - that a sustained reduction in road injury is possible.

Safe road engineering and road safety education are being addressed as a priority by the Moldovan Government. With assistance from the World Bank, EIB, EBRD, the European Commission and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Moldova has embarked on a major road rehabilitation programme affecting much of the country’s road network. Particular care is being taken to ensure safe road design and engineering are integral to this process, including a safety survey of the Moldovan road network commissioned by the Government and carried out by the International Road Assessment Programme. A National Road Safety Council has been established under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister with a clear commitment to road injury prevention. New programmes are being introduced to promote road safety education in schools along with public awareness campaigns to address major behavioural risk factors such as non-use of seat belts.

These efforts will be only partially effective if not accompanied by proper road policing. Effective policing of traffic law is essential to protect the public against the dangers of illegal driving and ensure compliance with protective legislation such as laws requiring seatbelt use and child car restraints. The European Transport Safety Council estimates that

¹ United Nations General Assembly, 64th Session, Resolution on Global Road Safety Crisis, 01.02.2010.

if effective road safety policing were carried out throughout Europe – following best practice in some countries - it could halve the number of lives lost on European roads.² The road police play a key role, too, in collecting road crash data and monitoring the effectiveness of road safety initiatives. Good enforcement and positive policing are vital for identifying local risks, monitoring progress and encouraging safe road use.

Proper enforcement more than pays for itself. Recent international studies have demonstrated the enormous value of positive police road traffic enforcement, particularly when combined with community involvement and public awareness to build support for police activities. For example, an aggressive campaign of enforcement by the New Zealand road police to crack down on drink-driving through compulsory breath-testing showed substantial reductions in night-time road crashes. Enforcement alone reduced crashes, but the reductions were far greater when combined with media and local public awareness campaigns. When combined with local campaigns, the police enforcement programme halved the number of crashes involving serious and fatal injuries. Overall the combined programme returned an estimated \$26 to society for every \$1 spent, while the New Zealand government reaped twice as much money as they spent on the initiative.³

More recently a 2008 study concluded that the employment of additional road police on four major roads in Uganda was one of the most cost effective public health investments undertaken in the country. Four squads of traffic patrols (20 police, four vehicles, equipment and administration) cost \$72,000 to introduce. However the result of their activities was an increase in road citations of \$327,311 in a year accompanied by a 17% drop in road deaths. An estimated 118 lives were saved. The researchers calculated that each road death in Uganda costs the country \$603 in lost income, not including savings to health and social services as a result of averted road injuries. The net gain to the government from the extra expenditure on police enforcement was over \$326,000.⁴

Melanie Marlett, Head of the World Bank in Moldova, has estimated that every life lost on Moldova's roads costs the equivalent of US\$ 511,000 to the Moldovan economy, not to mention the human cost of each life lost and each injured person.⁵ Safe roads are crucial to Moldova's

² European Transport Safety Council, *Police Enforcement Strategies to Reduce Traffic Casualties in Europe*, ETSC, Brussels, 1999, p.5.

³ Ted Miller, Michael Blewden and Jia-fang Zhang, *Cost savings from a sustained compulsory breath testing and media campaign in New Zealand*, *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 36 (2004) 783–794.

⁴ D Bishai, B Asimwe, S Abbas, A A Hyder and W Bazeyo, *Cost-effectiveness of traffic enforcement; case study from Uganda*, *Injury Prevention* 2008: 14; 223-227.

⁵ Make Roads Safe Moldova Campaign Launched, www.fiafoundation.org, 9.10.2009.

economic development – underpinning trade and tourism, connecting people to offices, schools and hospitals, and building a business environment attractive for foreign investors. Effective enforcement is therefore an important economic tool helping to prevent the tragic waste of resources caused by road deaths, the burden on health and social services caused by serious injuries, and lost opportunities for business, trade and tourism.

Road deaths in Moldova in 2009 cost the country in excess of \$300 million each year – a substantial toll on public resources equivalent to around 3% of GDP. Investment in good road policing in Moldova therefore makes excellent economic sense. In order to be effective, investment in policing must be accompanied by and lend support to policies to tackle police corruption.

The Problem of Police Corruption

The problem of police corruption has been identified by the Moldovan Government as an urgent priority. Corruption undermines enforcement, prevents effective decision-making and is a drain on scarce public resources. It is by no means a problem unique to Moldova. All countries suffer from it in some form, and to deny its existence could risk making corruption more likely. We recognised from the start that corruption exists in UK policing and that cases continue to be uncovered in the Republic of Georgia.

According to Transparency International's 2009 Global Corruption Barometer, the police are the most likely recipients of bribes throughout the world. Almost a quarter of all people in the 69 countries surveyed by TI who came into contact with the police over the previous 12 months reported paying a bribe (a significant growth since 2006).⁶ It is likely that road police are particularly culpable given their access and opportunities to stop and solicit members of the public.

The economic consequences of police corruption are particularly severe for the poorest members of the population. TI found the poorest fifth of all households – those who can least afford it - are far more likely to pay bribes to the police than wealthier households.

“(A) conservative estimate suggests that people spend around 7 per cent of their annual income on bribes. This is a huge proportion of disposable income by any standard, and for poorer people, it is likely to undermine their ability to address everyday needs.”⁷

Our investigation heard reports of corruption – particularly petty bribery – by some Moldovan road police officers. But we also saw evidence of a lack of adequate resources for policing which gravely undermined the ability of the road police to perform their duties. These conclusions are so generally accepted that they appear in advice to travellers to Moldova available on the internet:

“Police response to crimes, especially in areas widely frequented by foreigners, is good but hampered by a lack of resources. The Moldovan police are particularly capable at basic policing, but their ability to carry out complex investigations is hindered by a lack of necessary equipment... Solicitation of bribes by authorities at all levels continues to be a concern.”⁸

⁶ Transparency International, 2009 Global Corruption Barometer, TI 2009, pp.11, 13.

⁷ Op cit., TI 2009, p.14.

⁸ Moldova 2010 *Crime & Safety Report*, Overseas Security Advisory Council, www.osac.gov, 27 Jan 2010.

Other advice from the Association for Safe International Road Travel points out that:

“Enforcement of traffic laws is inadequate; Most police are very professional, but do not have adequate numbers of speed cameras, radar units or breathalyzers; Traffic regulations need to be strengthened...; Bribery attempts are common.”⁹

What is needed are strategies to reduce the risk of corruption occurring, effective sanctions when corruption is uncovered, continued vigilance and active monitoring, and – not least - adequate support for positive road policing. It is vital that road police are valued, recognised and rewarded for the important role they play. Moreover, we feel strongly that this should be recognised by the donor community and, where possible, assistance should be available to invest in high quality road policing and facilitate police reform.

⁹ *Road Traffic Report: Moldova, ASIRT 2009.*

Tackling Police Corruption: Relevance of the Georgian and UK examples

During the course of this investigation the concept of a 'culture of corruption' was mentioned more than once. Corrupt activities can become self-sustaining and embedded in everyday practice, making it difficult for individuals to break the norm. We were concerned to address a different notion, however – the contention that a national culture can somehow be conducive to corruption. The point was made to us that post-Soviet societies tend to be tolerant of corruption. Where bribery has become common practice, it was said there is inadequate public appetite for reform. Some suggested that as a result, the problem in Moldova is now too engrained to be tackled effectively.

The example of the Republic of Georgia is particularly pertinent for this reason. As a post-Soviet country, Georgia shares a cultural and historical legacy with Moldova which makes their experience particularly relevant. As one commentator said to us,

“We can understand the Dutch or Scandinavians might not suffer much corruption. But if the Georgians can tackle police corruption, why can't we?”

The same commentator placed great emphasis on the word 'if.' While most of the people we interviewed in Moldova were aware of the Georgian story, there was a degree of scepticism about the reality. The Moldovan delegation to Georgia was particularly concerned to see how much the Georgian experience might be transferable to Moldova.

A report published just prior to the implementation of the anti-corruption reforms in Georgia describes a “cultural acceptance of corruption” which the authors contended made reform difficult:

“For many decades, Georgians have been socialized to believe that there is no effective alternative to corrupt behavior. Rather than change this impression, the experience of the post-Soviet period has solidified it.... Georgians simply do not believe that the rule of law can protect their interests.”¹⁰

The researchers highlighted corruption among the road police:

“The overwhelming majority (of corrupt police) are... content to solicit small payments from motorists, shopkeepers, and other

¹⁰ Roy Godson, Dennis Jay Kenney, Margaret Litvin, Gigi Tevzadze, Building Societal Support for the Rule of Law in Georgia, Project Report to the National Institute of Justice, National Strategy Information Center, Washington, DC, October 31, 2003, p.8-9.

businesspeople. For example, police stationed at roadblocks on the highway between Tbilisi and the airport routinely extort small sums of money from drivers.”¹¹

Nevertheless, the reforms targeting police corruption in Georgia just months later succeeded in making a measurable impact in reducing bribery by the police and winning public confidence for road policing in Georgia.

One indicator of the success of Georgia’s anti-corruption strategy is Transparency International’s 2009 Global Corruption Barometer, which presents the results of an opinion survey on public attitudes to corruption, along with detailed information on the experience of bribery in countries around the globe. TI found that experience of petty bribery is growing in some parts of the world; with 3 in 10 people in post-Soviet countries reporting having paid a bribe over the previous year (compared with a global average of 1 in 10).¹²

Transparency International’s findings lend support to the success of the Georgian anti-corruption strategy targeting the police. The 2009 TI report shows the Republic of Georgia did slightly better than the EU average on overall corruption perception (on a scale of 1-5, 3.1% compared to 3.4%).¹³ What is more significant is that only 2% of Georgian households surveyed reported having paid a bribe of any kind over the previous year compared with a global average of 13% and an EU average of 5%. Moreover, 57% of Georgians said they felt government policies had been effective in the fight against corruption – a favourable comparison to the global figure of 31% and an EU average of 24%.¹⁴

A detailed analysis of the Georgian anti-corruption strategy suggests that anti-corruption measures aimed specifically at the road police – backed by clear objectives and political will - were among the most effective aspects of Georgian policy:

“One very clear example is among the most acknowledged reforms – reform of the traffic police. This reform took place shortly after the change of government... The government knew exactly what it wanted: to free traffic police from corruption, to increase their effectiveness and to enhance public confidence in this institution. It took the essential steps to achieve these objectives and as a result, the traffic police is currently considered one of the least corrupt institutions in Georgia. In

¹¹ Ibid, p.29.

¹² Transparency International, Op. Cit., TI 2009, p.9.

¹³ A score of 1=Not All Corrupt; 5=Extremely Corrupt.

¹⁴ Op cit., TI 2009, pp.34-35.

2003 very few would have believed that Georgia would ever have a corruption-free traffic police force.”¹⁵

This conclusion is supported by a more recent review by the Jamestown Foundation:

“Instead of a Soviet-styled force having almost no public support and deeply marred in corruption some six years ago, now Georgia has a police trusted by 81% of the public...”¹⁶

The Georgian reforms have reached deeply into the perceptions of a new generation of Georgians. It is a tribute to the reforms that so many of the young police officers we met took such evident pride in their jobs, and that the Police Academy has no difficulty recruiting and training new officers.

Our programme also included a visit to the UK guided by the Police Federation of England and Wales. Public perceptions of corruption in the UK are at a similar level to what has been achieved in Georgia, with just 3% reporting having paid a bribe of any type within the last 12 months.¹⁷ Estimates of police corruption are relatively low: A 2003 Home Office study of police corruption estimated that between 0.5 and 1.0% of police staff in England and Wales, including officers and civilians, might be corrupt (i.e., were either found guilty of or were under investigation for potential unethical practices).¹⁸

While corruption is at a low level in UK policing, cases of corruption continue to be uncovered even at the highest levels of policing.¹⁹ Most frequently, corruption involves misusing police authority in obtaining or leaking information for personal gain – though not necessarily financial gain. However sometimes it extends to conspiring with criminals to commit crimes, carrying out thefts during police raids, or using their position to gain sexual favours in exchange for ignoring offences. It is not only post-Soviet countries who suffer from or need to be vigilant about police corruption. Our investigation was interested, therefore, in learning lessons both from the Georgian experience and from that of the UK.

¹⁵ Tamuna Karosanidze, *TI-Georgia, National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan: Elaboration and Implementation*, U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre; Bergen, Norway, 2009, p.11.

¹⁶ Giorgi Kvelashvili, *Success of Georgia Police Reform Is a Function of Sovereignty*, Jamestown Foundation, 22 April 2010, citing International Republican Institute opinion survey, *Georgian National Study*, March 2010, p.46.

¹⁷ Transparency International, Op. Cit., TI 2009, p.32.

¹⁸ Joel Miller, *Police Corruption in England and Wales: An assessment of current evidence*, Home Office On-line Report 11/03, p.6.

¹⁹ *Ali Dizaei jailed for corruption: Metropolitan Police Commander Ali Dizaei has been sentenced to four years for assaulting and falsely arresting a man in a dispute over £600*, Story from BBC NEWS: www.news.bbc.co.uk, 2010/02/08.

Observations in Moldova

The most important point to be made about road police corruption in Moldova is that the political will is possible at a high level to begin to tackle the problem. Our investigation had the direct support of the Moldovan Prime Minister who took a lead in making road safety enforcement a national priority. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister assisted in instigating the programme, while the Minister of State played a key role in arranging and overseeing our visit. The Minister for the Interior ensured we were given access to policing at all levels, and personally met with us to underline his support for an anti-corruption strategy. Other Ministries also played a role and lent us their support – not least the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communication who sponsored one of our expert participants. The very helpful role played by Chief of the Traffic Police Mr Botnariuc and his senior officers shows an appetite to deliver constructive change.

In Moldova we observed a state of affairs similar in many ways to that which applied in Georgia prior to the police reform. A vicious cycle of largely petty corruption among the road police had set in, fuelled by a lack of proper resources for road policing. We were impressed by many of the road police officers we met and their willingness to assist us in our investigations. They expressed frustration at not being able to do their jobs in a professional manner, and morale was generally at a very low level. Our police colleagues in the UK and Georgian delegations recognised and sympathised with this:

“Where there is a historic process of corrupt activity, and if Police Officers - especially the lower ranking officers - feel undervalued, under-rewarded or de-motivated without loyalty and recognition for their valuable contribution, and they are not properly challenged and or disciplined regarding their behaviour, then systematic and internal breeding of malpractice will continue.”²⁰

In our view, the most crucial pre-requisites for successful reform exist in Moldova – the political will to implement change directed from a high level, and the desire at all levels for change to happen.

Our observations touch on a number of areas where we believe reform is needed. For clarity, we have divided our report into recommendations by our UK and Georgian delegations to Moldova.

²⁰ Comments by Inspector Alan Jones and Sgt. John Giblin.

Recommendations by UK Delegation

Road Safety Performance Management

There was a clear awareness of the need for road safety enforcement by the Traffic Police. The Head of the Road Police Department, Mr. Botnariuc, introduced our delegations to the alarming problem of road crashes in Moldova, highlighting the three main areas of concern by both the Government and Traffic Police - speeding vehicles, drink-driving and pedestrian safety. However, it was not evident how these priorities are communicated and assessed against officer delivery and competencies. It may well be the case that the system works well, and officers are sufficiently informed, but in the time available it was not possible to clarify the level of communication upwards and downwards between the command team and the officers they manage.

We saw the two main databases used by the police – the Vehicles Database and Traffic Violators Database - and were shown how they are connected to other State Registry databases such as driver licensing. These provide a very useful intelligence tool and could in future undertake a performance management function. We feel there is a general need in Moldova for better collection of data on road crashes, and for more systematic monitoring of the role, structure and performance of the road police.

There needs to be clear communication at all levels of policing, and an appreciation of goals, objectives, priorities, time scales and accountabilities. Linked to this, a target based on realistic objectives for casualty reduction in the short, medium and longer term would be a useful measure to assess road safety performance. This is inherently useful as it can and should oblige not only the road police, but all relevant parties and agencies to work collectively and to one single goal determined by the Government who will ultimately be held responsible for its success or failure.

Three issues caused particular concern in relation to performance management: The first is the level of road policing. Colonel Botnariuc commands just 493 staff (of whom just 5 are women) for a country with a population of around 3.5 million, or around 14 officers per 100,000 population. The recent emphasis on road safety has resulted in an increase in road police staffing by 100 in just six months – a sign that new priority is being given to this area. Significantly, prior to this resurgence, the Road Traffic Police seem to have been in terminal decline, shrinking from 1,400 staff in 1991 to just 392 in 2008. In the capital, Chisinau, the Divisional Road Traffic Police have a complement of just 202 officers (3 women) – a reduction over recent years from 537. Not surprisingly, Moldovan road police raised their concern at the overall reduction in their officer numbers.

After the Georgian reforms the Patrol Police were reduced dramatically - from 16,000 to a current level of 3,320 police (13% of whom are women). This is a level of policing of about 63 officers per 100,000 people – four and a half times greater than the national level of Moldovan road police staffing. Of course, the significant reduction in police numbers in Moldova needs to be properly assessed against internal needs and requirements, so we reserve further comment.

The adequacy of road police staffing is dependent upon the overall structure of policing, and there is no uniform formula even within the EU for the organisation of policing, the degree of specialisation, the range of services provided, the sharing of responsibility with other government departments (for example, for driver training), the amount of local autonomy they enjoy, etc.²¹ These issues require independent analysis and discussion. However we feel the level of police staffing in Moldova underlines the need for an evaluation of the capacity and resilience of road police officers to carry out their role effectively.

We are also concerned that corruption may undermine the ability of the police operational management properly to determine road safety priorities and the ability of government to develop clear strategies. Where bribes are accepted, road traffic offences are most often not recorded, leading to an under-reporting of road incidents and illegal behaviour. One example is enough to illustrate the potential damage caused by corruption: incidences where corruption has influenced the description of who is at fault in a pedestrian road incident.

Pedestrian casualties form the bulk of the fatality figures for Moldova and therefore require urgent and specific action. A large proportion of these casualties were described as incidents where the pedestrian was at fault – i.e., pedestrians not giving priority to oncoming vehicles.²² We were told that a 'normal' bribe paid to road police to ignore a minor offence might be in the order of 100 lei. However it could also be as high as 3,000 euros if a favourable police report might make a difference between imprisonment and less severe penalties. The example given to us was where a driver had killed a pedestrian (perhaps due to drink-driving or speeding). A large bribe might be sufficient to ensure the police report laid blame on the pedestrian.

A third area for concern arose from reports by road police officers of their limited investigative capacity and undertaking at scenes of serious and fatal collisions. Serious road traffic collisions in the UK are treated as crime scenes with a particularly strong emphasis on forensic investigation. Key important information can be gathered at the scene which appropriately apportions blame and helps provide road safety guidance and improvements. Impartial and reliable

²¹ Tapani Mäkinen, David M. Zaidel et al, *Traffic enforcement in Europe: effects, measures, needs and future*, Final report of the ESCAPE consortium, Dec. 2002, p.13.

²² In the UK drivers are expected to avoid pedestrians in all circumstances, and driver training includes rapid response to situations where, for instance, a child might run out in the road unexpectedly.

evidence is also fundamental to fair legal processes required by Human Rights legislation. This is an area where officers should receive more detailed specialist training and equipment to satisfy the need for good investigative processes.

Road Police Resources and Equipment

The operational Head of Roads Policing in Moldova spoke with feeling of the need to address road safety and keep staff motivated in order to reduce road casualties. Yet it must be extremely difficult for him to achieve his priorities and objectives against a background of under-resourcing for the road police. This neglect is particularly reflected in poor equipment and vehicles.

Resources are of course a major obstacle to improving traffic enforcement equipment, especially where public revenues are low and further stretched by the global economic crisis. The important issue of resources for road safety enforcement is a theme we will return to later in this report. Our aim here is to describe the conditions we viewed during our visit to Moldova.

Speed Enforcement

Of the annual total of road collisions in Moldova (3,764) almost half are attributed to speed, yet there are no fixed speed cameras in the country (in contrast Georgia has now more than 1,000 speed cameras). There are also very few hand-held devices in Moldova – just 34 for the entire country. Some raions have no speed detection equipment at their disposal.

Penalties for violations are obviously important. We were encouraged, in our meeting with the Minister for the Interior, to hear of new Road Traffic Regulations and a new Contravention Code (both adopted in 2009), setting forth stricter penalties and introducing a penalty points system, showing the Government's commitment to enforcing speed limits and other safe road behaviour. These are very positive steps.

However speeding can only really be determined by enforcement equipment. We were surprised to learn about the lack of devices available to the Moldovan road police which must be something noticed, too, by the public. In addition to improving road infrastructure and supplying information to drivers on speed limits, there has to be a measurable degree of enforcement of the new penalty system which is robust enough to be a deterrent.

We visited the Chisinau Road Police where we were acquainted with the daily work of police officers, saw police patrol vehicles and were able to view the equipment they use. Existing handheld speed detection devices are mostly over ten years old and mainly, we understand, of

Russian origin. We are unclear of the level of accuracy of these devices which should be a fundamental requirement in order to ensure public confidence.²³

While static speed cameras can have an important role to play in road safety enforcement, used in the wrong places they have only a limited impact in reducing speeding. Research shows they create a 'wave effect,' causing drivers to cut their speed only when they are near the camera. They also can reduce public support for speed enforcement, as they are often seen as purely a means of revenue-raising. They are really recommended only near places where the risk from speeding is particularly high – e.g., near school crossings.

Speed devices measuring time over distance are much more effective at controlling speed, but are significantly more expensive and technically challenging to install. They require a suitable and reliable back-up data facility to cross-check vehicle registration and licensing, along with a secure system and coordination through the legal system to process offences. It is important, too, that any speed devices are not open to 'editing' by police officers. Currently such equipment does not exist in Moldova.

We would suggest that such devices could play a major role in reducing opportunities for bribery and corruption, as they would minimise exposure to officers taking money in roadside fines. They require no input whatsoever from enforcement officers to detect speed offences once installed, particularly when linked with Automatic Number Plate Recognition. However we are not sure whether the Moldovan system of data-handling is currently in a position to manage this equipment. There is also a danger that back room staff could be drawn into corrupt practices, so further checks and safeguards would need to be ensured if the process of fining drivers for offences was removed from Police Officers. Upgrading speed detection equipment to remove the requirement for road police to handle money must therefore be done properly and with proper investment in training, monitoring and other systems of control.

Drink Driving

Next to speeding, the second major road risk identified by the Moldovan Government and Road Traffic Police was drink-driving. Moldova is known for its excellent wines, and possesses two internationally recognised wine cellars in the proximity of Chisinau, both listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for their size and huge collections. Yet we were informed that in Moldova as a whole there are merely 27

²³ The one piece of speed detection equipment we viewed was mounted inside a traffic police vehicle and would not be accepted as accurate in the UK, as radar readings through a glass screen can be significantly distorted and evidentially unsound. We accept that in other countries (e.g. Romania) such equipment is used.

hand held breath-testing devices available for enforcement purposes. The 202 road police officers in Chisinau, a city with a population of 760,000, between them have access to just one breath/alcohol testing device. Given the suggested high rate of drinking and driving, we feel the lack of breath testing equipment is a serious failing undermining enforcement.

There was no time to discuss the Police response to drug driving issues in Moldova. Driving under the influence of drugs is a significant issue in other European countries and in the UK is considered as big a problem as drink-driving. We suspect drug-impaired driving may be an issue in Moldova, though there is no evidence of the scale of the problem. UK Officers use Field Impairment Testing methods for detecting drug-driving, which could be a skill transferred to a small cadre of Moldovan road Police Officers.

Vehicles and Equipment

A further concern was the state of the police vehicle fleet. For example in total, Chisinau Road Police has 42 patrol vehicles at its disposal (with 25 deployed at any time), of which 90% are old cars dating from the mid-seventies. We were surprised at the poor standard of these vehicles. We were shown one relatively new patrol car which possessed a mounted speed camera. However we stopped other police vehicles in use which fell far below this standard and viewed many others in seemingly poor condition on the roads. If these are representative of the wider vehicle fleet, they do nothing to enhance public confidence. They must sap the morale and enthusiasm of officers expected to drive them, whilst simultaneously being expected to enforce the rules of the road.

Important areas to consider for urgent upgrading would be a review of the police vehicle warning equipment, especially the roof light bars. Modern LED display functionality would make them seriously visible at all times of day and especially at night. The mounting of the on-board speed device we viewed would contravene UK health and safety legislation and was clumsy in appearance and position. This is something the authorities may wish take into account in due course.

We were particularly dismayed at the standard of in-car equipment we saw. There was no road scene protection equipment in the vehicles, such as lights, cones, tape for securing a scene, high visibility advance warning signs, high visibility vests or even a brush to clear debris from the scene of a crash. There were no first aid kits and no blankets for the injured. In one vehicle there was nothing whatsoever but a bent wheel with a bald tyre – not even carpets on the car floors or in the boot cavity. The lack of basic in-car equipment is something that could be addressed at reasonably minimal cost and which is essential for officers and scene protection, especially during dark nights. In addition, we suggest all officers should be considered for the issue of high visibility Police vests/tabards/jackets to protect them and make sure they are visible at scenes of incidents.

A further issue of concern was the lack of adequate fuel for carrying out road policing. We heard from more than one source that – even with rationing - fuel supplies regularly run out before the end of the month, making it impossible to run an effective patrol service. We understand that fuel allocations are fraught with difficulty and that economy and control over fuel use is vital. This underlines the need, in our view, for a thorough capacity review of road policing and equipment to ensure basic needs are met.

Traffic Control

We visited the traffic control centre, ‘Semafor Service,’ in the central road police station in Chisinau which monitors the 180 traffic lights in the city (60 of which function from telephone lines). One of its uses is to manage ‘green routes’ through the city for travelling dignitaries and heads of state. Its CCTV network was very basic by UK and European standards. The equipment, whilst functional, is limited in its capacity and ability to support a modern road and city infrastructure. There are only four serviceable video cameras for the whole of Chisinau, installed in key intersections. These are fixed, with no possibility of remote movement to survey the scene. On the day of our visit, one was malfunctioning. The last improvement to the center was done in 1989 – over twenty years ago.

Good CCTV imaging transmitted to a central communications room has enormous value in providing a second-by-second account of traffic and roadside activity. This can serve numerous purposes aside from its obvious value in monitoring traffic density, congestion and flow. There are consequential benefits to be gained by the police in relation to traffic intelligence and evidence, as well as providing an assurance regarding public safety in areas where risk may be an issue. It can also be a great asset to operational policing.

Although expensive to replace or renew, there could be an opportunity to consider the investment potential and value of proper CCTV imaging in making the roads and streets of the capital city safer. As traffic problems and density grow from the estimated 300,000 vehicle movements per day, we feel upgrading of the traffic control system could become essential.

Police Training, Conditions and Morale

In the course of our visit we heard a number of complaints – not just by police staff – of the low salaries earned by the road police. Low pay was even mentioned to us by one official outside the police force as a reason most members of the public acquiesce with police corruption. Bribes are accepted as a fact of life given that low paid road police officers need, somehow, to supplement their incomes to survive.

During our investigation we heard of salaries averaging the equivalent of around €150 a month, as well as stories of unpaid overtime-working, poor pensions and benefits, low morale and other challenges. Police uniforms are all over ten years old and in need of updating. However we have no evidence of comparable pay scales or actual hourly earnings, and cannot comment on the adequacy of road police salaries and benefits in relation to other public sector workers. What is clear to us is that police pay and conditions are issues that must be considered in any review of road policing and enforcement.

We did not visit the Police Academy in Moldova and therefore cannot evaluate the adequacy of recruitment or training for the road police and support staff. However we understand there is no specific training offered for road police officers. If true, the training needs of the road police force must be addressed as an urgent priority. Specific training is required in road traffic rules, road vehicle regulations, dealing with violators, procedures for collecting reliable evidence at road incidents, dealing with foreign drivers, assisting the injured, and many other issues particular to the work of road police. Consideration should be given to introducing a national standard of qualification based on knowledge and experience for all road police officers – something which would assist in boosting professional esteem. Accreditation must be transparent, based on merit, and free from influence or patronage.

Along with this, we feel there is need for an internal evaluation of training and its appropriateness to the modern demands of road policing. In Moldova, with major new road infrastructure projects in the pipeline, this must include issues of highway maintenance and management. Our recommendations for renewing enforcement equipment, if acted upon, will necessitate new approaches. Any investment in speed detection, breath-testing and other equipment must, for public confidence, be accompanied by adequate training and instruction in their use.

In addition, there should be provision for specialist training. This might include, as it does in the UK, special driving skills for certain police staff. One new area of where the Moldovan Traffic Police may wish to build capacity is in assisting the public to deal with serious collisions and injuries. In the UK specially trained Family Liaison Officers provide a support network to the families of road victims as part of the caring and welfare support provided by the road police. Their role is to help ease the pain and suffering experienced by families as well as keeping them informed of any progress in the investigative and judicial processes.

Pay, conditions, training, uniforms and equipment are all important factors in the state of road police morale and the likelihood of accepting bribes. Police Officers in the UK are paid relatively well, have excellent pension expectations and good terms and conditions of service. They have access to modern equipment and high standards of training. Where appropriate, individual officers are recognized and rewarded, and there are clear opportunities for promotion and betterment. As a result they are well motivated and less likely to be tempted by opportunities for corruption and bribery. They are human too, and temptations for malpractice are always there and sometimes succeed. But for UK police, too much is at stake to make corruption attractive to many.

Good pay, training and conditions make it easier rigorously to enforce internal discipline and the road police ethical code in the UK. Officer peer pressure is a significant factor, as any obvious malpractice linked to bribes or corruption generally would be reported to a senior officer by a colleague. There is little sympathy either among the public or within the police services for corrupt police, making it possible for the justice system to deal harshly with officers taking bribes or dealing in a dishonest way. It is helpful that there is a specific public offence in the UK of intentionally bribing a Police officer through inducement or other direct means.²⁴

The importance of these factors as a vaccine against petty bribery is also supported by the way in which the Georgian Government have been able to address their historical problems of road police corruption through improved conditions of service, training and equipment for Traffic Police Officers. Both the UK and Georgian delegations feel strongly that a review of road policing in Moldova is needed, and that any anti-corruption strategy must take on board these issues to be successful.

Driver Training, Licensing and Vehicle Registration

The Moldovan Ministry of Transport has estimated that one third of all road crashes in Moldova are caused in part by the poor state of the roads.²⁵ Road infrastructure improvements are now in course which will do much to improve the transport network and, thanks to the high priority given by the Government, will include principles of safe road design as a basis. Our delegation noted the paradox, however, that the current poor state of the road network might actually disguise other road risks by reducing average speeds – risks such as poor driving standards and unsafe vehicles.

Throughout the world systems of driver licensing and vehicle registration have a bad reputation as hotspots for corruption. It is all too easy to bribe an examiner in order to pass a driving test or pay a vehicle inspection centre to turn a blind eye to vehicle faults. We were very interested to view the conditions of driver licensing and vehicle testing/registration in Moldova for this reason.

Our delegations visited a centre in Chisinau of the Directorate of Transport Registration and Drivers' Qualifications. We were shown how licensing exams (theoretical and practical) are organized and how the process of vehicle registration is conducted. On the day we visited

²⁴ New bribery laws are progressing through Parliament at present which create offences of offering a bribe or requesting and receiving a bribe by any individual to procure a reward for improper exercise of a public or business activity.

²⁵ *Make Roads Safe Moldova Campaign Launched*, FIA Foundation, www.fiafoundation.org, 9 October 2009.

there were heavy demands on the centre and its staff from the public, who were there to take tests, obtain licences or vehicle number plates, present and certify documents, and register vehicles. The public were being handled politely and their applications were all being dealt with in turn. However there were queues growing (not assisted by our visit) and the environment for both public and staff was not comfortable.

As previously, we were struck by the chronic lack of resources for the Centre. We noted the poor conditions, the old testing vehicles and old technology in use. Members of the public who wish to sit practical driving tests have the option of using the Test Centre vehicles, so we asked to see these. We were shown two vehicles (a minibus and a truck) which dated from the mid-fifties and – in the case of the minibus – failed to start.

We were encouraged by the driving licence testing procedure which mirrors that of the UK for on-line knowledge checks of the Highway Code. The Georgian delegation, however, pointed to opportunities for cheating, and therefore the potential for corruption, in the lack of surveillance in the testing room. We are very pleased that as a result of our visit, this shortcoming has been dealt with immediately and cameras have now been installed.

We have noted a number of reports alleging that bribery in driver examinations was not unknown. It was said that, in addition to the formal fee for obtaining a license plus 'money for fuel consumed during the exam,' unofficially there are a range of fees which can be paid to ensure exam success.

"So, if you pay 100 euros, the guard/examiner will tell you only after driving just a few meters, 'Well, you've passed.'.... Another category is people who get driving licenses via relatives or friends as part of the crony system... All those who have been through driving schools know that there is well-tuned corruption, but nobody wants to destroy the system. That is why over time newscasts begin with: "A new accident ... Speeding ... Three people injured ... Two dead." ²⁶

We have no evidence that these reports of bribery for passing exams were true. However the facilities we visited - suffering from poor technology, old equipment and heavy demands - would not easily prevent or reveal such occurrences. We would be interested to know more, too, about the training and certification of driving instructors and of staff who carry out tests, and whether the practical tests meet basic standards. These are areas we felt required attention.

We were therefore very happy to hear of the improvements in driver licensing procedures which have now been implemented by the Ministry of Information Technologies since our visit. These include a new Driver Examination Centre well-equipped with computers and a video system

²⁶ Victoria Puiu, *Scolile Auto si Politia Rutiera Sistem de Coruptie Bine Pus la Punct*, Transparency International Moldova blog, www.transparency.md, 21 April 2010.

to reduce the potential for cheating; the purchase of 2 modern cars with cameras to record the examination process; and the addition of a second official from a different district to oversee the exams, helping prevent 'cronyism' in obtaining licenses. These reforms should help to remove the possibility of corruption in driver licensing.

We also visited the offices in the Centre for vehicle registration and issuing number plates. The procedure seemed to be a straightforward matter of checking whether all the necessary documents were presented and in order. However the Centre had no way of knowing whether the vehicle road-worthiness test certificates presented by applicants as part of the necessary documentation reflected the real state of those vehicles. This is another area where opportunities for corruption might exist, though we did not have time to visit a testing centre or examine procedures.²⁷

We have one observation to make concerning what – to our UK delegation – seems a wasteful procedure. In Moldova vehicle registration is linked to the residence of the owner. Thus, when a car owner moves to a different area they are required to apply for a new number plate, a system dating from Soviet times. With modern data systems for driver and vehicle registration this should not be necessary. In the UK once a vehicle is registered the registration number remains the same regardless of the residence of the owner and remains with the vehicle as it is bought and sold. We would suggest that scarce resources used in continually re-registering vehicles would be better devoted to upgrading registration technology and facilities.

A final point must be made regarding vehicle number plates and the potential for corruption (or at least undue influence). In Moldova there has been a system of issuing Ministers and senior civil servants with special number plates for their vehicles. These plates grant immunity from traffic law - indeed police officers are not allowed to stop these vehicles irrespective of circumstances. We were impressed by the decision of the Georgian authorities to abolish special number plates for government ministers and high-ranking public servants, arguing that for reform to be credible it should start at the top. We are pleased to note the Moldovan Government has taken the decision in principle to cancel special number plates – a policy which will have an important symbolic impact in reinforcing their message to the public that no one should be above the law.

²⁷ The UK delegation were greatly impressed by the Georgian driver licensing and vehicle registration centre we visited in Rustavi. We note, however, that the thorny issue of vehicle road-worthiness testing is still to be tackled by the Georgian Government.

Corruption Monitoring, Detection and Police Ethics

In June 2002 the Moldovan government established a Centre for Combating Economic Crimes and Corruption (CECC). We visited its Headquarters where the Vice-Director, Mr. Alexei Secieru, introduced us to its activities and responsibilities. Its 500 staff are mostly concerned with corruption linked with economic crime (such as money-laundering) rather than bribery linked to the road police, driver licensing or vehicle registration. However they do investigate in response to complaints.

The Chief Investigator of the Anti-Corruption unit, Viorel Mihaila, acknowledged a major problem exists in these areas of activity. He ranked the risk of corruption in Moldova as follows: first, among Customs officials; second, the Traffic Police; third, in education (e.g., paying for exam results or university entry); and fourth, in the Health Service (paying for special or speedy treatment).

Since their establishment the CECC had handled 15 cases of corruption involving police officers. Some of these were cases of 'passive' corruption, such as accepting bribes, while others involved police officers actively offering services or handling goods in return for money. The Anti-Corruption unit of 50 staff is hampered in being able to investigate these forms of corruption due to lack of complaints. A free hotline for anonymous reporting of cases only received two calls this year regarding corrupt police officers (and, interestingly, one call from a police officer complaining of being offered bribes!)

The CECC cooperates with the Ministry for Internal Affairs in corruption cases within the competences of each authority. They are hindered by legal constraints from undertaking undercover operations. This and the fact that road police bribery is convenient for both parties involved (as the offender gets away with a smaller fine) were cited as reasons for being unable to give an estimate of the magnitude of corruption or the cost to the economy in lost revenues.

Other impediments to their work were also mentioned. They recognise that prevention is better than cure, but say that with only 30 staff in the organisation conducting training seminars or working on educational and other preventive programmes, it is difficult to make a major impact. The technical equipment available to them for investigations is – as elsewhere – old, outdated, and mostly of Chinese origin. They too suffer from a low fuel allocation for their staff vehicles (reportedly an annual allowance sufficient for just ten months of activity). Finally, the current economic situation is a worry as budgetary constraints will make it even more difficult to operate.

We would suggest that, as a priority, the CECC should undertake work to estimate annually the extent of bribery in different sectors and the magnitude of revenues lost in each sector as a result. Monitoring corruption and its costs would do much to underscore the case for

investment in anti-corruption activities and equipment. Estimates of the 'informal economy' are always difficult and, by definition, cannot be exact measures. However – rather than relying on the complaints hotline for data - it should be possible to do survey work on an anonymous basis with a sample of the public. This is an area where international assistance might also be available.

Upgrading the enforcement equipment, training and systems used by the road police should also help in the detection of corrupt activities. The equipment and procedures used for road traffic enforcement in the UK are generally evidence recording. The information gathered must be robust enough to substantiate any infringements for the justice system, including the way in which the officer dealt with the case. The procedures are designed to be auditable and accountable, and are used too to gather vital data on road crashes, violations and police performance. In common with procedures and technology we viewed in Georgia, such systems make it much harder for corrupt road police to avoid detection over time.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has established a special internal security unit to monitor complaints, and this is a very positive step. We feel that detection of corrupt activities would also be assisted by more systematic internal investigation by the police within each local force. As in Georgia, in the UK separate Professional Standards Units within policing have responsibility for collecting and analyzing information on unethical police activity. They gather information from a variety of sources, including police colleagues, informants, other agencies, audits, and covert surveillance of suspects. The public can complain directly to these units within local police departments, and may do so by phone, via police websites or visits. The PSUs formally investigate any suspects identified – investigations which may lead to prosecution and imprisonment in severe cases. Although they are police officers, PSU staff operate independently of the local police and move to different forces to discourage protectionism. Such units should be considered for introduction in the Moldovan police services.

As an aid to this, we recommend the introduction of a clear, enforceable code of conduct for all road police. This should be well-publicised and easily accessible to the public. In the UK the police code of conduct is integral to police professional pride – a strong antidote to corruption.

By its nature corruption can become systemic and self-sustaining within pockets of public institutions. Independent public scrutiny is therefore vital. In the UK, Parliament – particularly the Home Affairs Select Committee – plays a strong role in holding the police and other government agencies accountable for their activities and performance. The media have been active in reporting cases of corruption and criticising police practices. In Moldova the Parliamentary Committee which oversees public order issues and a variety of media organisations have taken an interest in road policing. The CECC mentioned their use of the media in highlighting the more notorious cases of corruption which have occurred. We feel public scrutiny at all levels is to be encouraged in order to shed light, whenever possible, on these issues.

We also feel there could be a role for a specific, independent agency concerned with police standards. In the UK an Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), funded by the Government, exists to receive complaints of malpractice by individuals or groups of police. They have powers to investigate impartially and independently, and their recommendations – which can be far-ranging - must be acted upon in the public interest. Consideration should be given to the potential for independent scrutiny of policing in Moldova to assist in combating corruption.²⁸

Promoting Positive Road Policing

One of the best cures for bribery and corruption is for the road police to play a positive and visible role in road casualty reduction. In Moldova we were told that, unfortunately, “contact between the public and the road police actually reduces the credibility of the police.” Where contact with the police is largely negative and often associated with the collection of bribes, this reaction is not surprising. It illustrates the urgent need for reform and a more positive approach to road policing.

Education and media campaigns on their own are not enough – they need to be combined with police leadership and sustained enforcement in order to have a lasting impact. Enforcement campaigns conducted on their own can generate public hostility if the local population are not involved, informed about the need for casualty reduction, and prepared for the initiative – otherwise police actions are vulnerable to accusations of revenue-raising or local harassment.²⁹ In contrast, the involvement of the road police can have a positive impact on public attitudes to the police. This was evident in Costa Rica, where police engagement in handing out information to the public on the importance of wearing seat belts helped turn around public attitudes to policing while at the same time creating support for compulsory seat belt wearing.³⁰ In the US, studies of effective seat belt campaigns have shown the best results are obtained through combined media action, community engagement and enforcement.³¹

In the UK effective partnership working plays a key role in the Government’s road safety strategy. This partnership includes Police, local government, emergency services, schools, road safety groups,

²⁸ Indeed, while impressed with their record and results, the UK delegation would suggest that the development of more independent scrutiny of policing from outside the MIA would also be desirable in Georgia for the future.

²⁹ Claire Corbett, *Roads Policing: Current Context and Imminent Dangers*, Policing, Volume 2, Number 1 (2008), pp. 131–142.

³⁰ FIA Foundation, *Per Amor: Costa Rica’s Seat Belt Campaign*, FIAF November 2005.

³¹ Vis. the example of North Carolina: Donald W. Reinfurt, *Documenting the sustainability of a mature Click It or Ticket program: The North Carolina experience*, Journal of Safety Research Volume 35, Issue 2, 2004, Pages 181-188.

academics and members of the public. All partners have a stake in casualty reduction. They work together to determine local needs and priorities, identify and target key causes of serious road casualties in the area, tackle collision 'hot spots,' keep track of road crash data, and plan and monitor interventions combined with a public education, information and a local media strategy. High profile enforcement by the road police is a core part of this package. The media are informed not just about campaign themes, but are kept regularly updated with results and case studies that build public support for road police enforcement.³²

In Moldova, the establishment of the National Road Safety Council has created opportunities for a broad based and inclusive campaign of enforcement to reduce road deaths and injuries. Chaired by the Prime Minister, the Council comprises the major public partners necessary to promote road safety, including the Road Traffic Police Chief, along with representatives of NGOs. The Council is currently in the process of developing a three year road safety strategy and intends publishing annual road safety plans.

We recommend that these plans should incorporate as much involvement and joint ownership of road safety strategy as possible - from Government down to the front line road police officer, and including local people. Within this, a visible, positive role for the road police should be envisaged for the future.

Corruption Prevention Strategies

All the areas mentioned above have a role to play in preventing corruption in road policing. We would like to summarise what we see as the core elements of a prevention strategy:

- **Promoting an ethical police culture** – We recommend the introduction of a new Professional Code of Conduct and Ethics which applies to all staff, including those at the highest levels.
- **Ensuring road police morale** – Investment in the road police, including a review of their salaries, benefits, uniforms, equipment and conditions of work, is needed urgently to ensure morale and build professional pride.
- **Good quality training and recruitment** – Training must be designed to meet modern needs. Fair, transparent and robust recruitment procedures can ensure the best people – at low risk of corruption – are hired.
- **Reducing opportunities for corruption and bribery** – We recommend the introduction of modern equipment, backed by

³² A good example is Essex County Council's award-winning Essex Casualty Reduction Board Strategy, www.drivingcasualtiesdown.org

secure systems, to relieve the road police from the need to take money for fines.

- **Strengthening management and supervision** – particularly in high risk areas – The role, structure and performance of the road police should be regularly reviewed. In addition policing priorities – such as casualty reduction – need to be clearly communicated to all staff. All staff should feel they are part of a team working towards the same goals.
- **Monitoring and proactive investigation to improve individual accountability** – We recommend the introduction of specially trained and staffed internal units to monitor police ethics locally and investigate complaints.
- **Improving the security of information** – Modern and unified data systems can do much to improve performance monitoring, services to the public and enforcement. These need to be secure and safe from interference or influence.
- **Independent oversight of policing** – Independent oversight by different agencies, by parliament, the media and the public reduces the risk of corruption.
- **Promoting positive road policing** – For road police in particular, having a positive role to play in casualty reduction helps to boost police morale and improve relations with the public, thereby reducing the likelihood of corruption.

Resources for Effective Road Policing and Reducing Corruption

There are no official estimates of the cost of bribery to the Moldovan Government and economy. Transparency International's survey in Moldova for their Global Corruption Barometer 2009 found that 28% of people surveyed reported paying a bribe at some point over the previous year.³³ They also estimated conservatively that, globally, people on average pay 7% of their incomes in bribes. Extrapolating from this, a very rough estimate based on population and average per capita income in Moldova would suggest that \$175 million annually is lost in petty bribery. Globally the police account for a quarter of all bribes paid. If this is true in Moldova, some \$44 million a year is being lost to Government revenues for policing because of bribes.

The presentation by the Georgian delegation on the police reforms in Georgia provides an indication of what can be achieved over time when corruption is tackled effectively, delivering an increase in public revenues of \$2.8 billion over a five-year period. These revenues have been devoted to improving police pay and conditions, upgrading offices

³³ TI, Op Cit., p.34.

and equipment, improving data collection and strategic planning, and most importantly, contributing significantly to casualty reduction and better enforcement.

In the initial stages, this involved significant assistance by the donor community. We understand that after this kick-start in funding, the anti-corruption strategy became self-financing as the leakage of money lost through bribery ended and revenues from enforcement rose.

Circumstances in Moldova are clearly very different to the situation which applied in Georgia at the start of their reform process. Even with strong political will in Moldova to implement change, the approach will have to be incremental rather than nuclear. This can be a strength. 'Bite size' measures can be easier to communicate, deliver measurable successes quickly, and have greater resonance with the public than large institutional shifts. Reforms need to be managed by a process that is both acceptable to the state and to the people, and draw upon lessons learned elsewhere.

The feature of the Georgian road police reform which is most often remembered by outsiders is the almost wholesale sacking of the existing police force. This certainly produced results, and we viewed many young police officers – men and women – who were subsequently recruited from other professional backgrounds (lawyers, civil society leaders or scientists) and trained as road police. They all attested to never having dreamed of joining the corrupt police force previously, and their pride in their work as police officers now was inspiring to witness. However we were equally impressed by the police officers we met in Georgia who were members of the force prior to the reforms. Their commitment to eliminating corruption and their pride in the police services was just as strong as the new recruits.

We feel that a wholesale disruption of the existing police force would be unwise and unnecessary. We met many road police officers who were keen to do a good job. The lack of resources devoted to road policing has had clear consequences in low morale, inadequate training and old equipment and procedures, greatly undermining performance. These issues must be addressed.

Moldova is the poorest country in Europe, and it is understandable that resources are not easily available. Help will be needed to invest in road policing and kick-start reform. We strongly recommend that the donor community build finance for police reform, training, and equipment into their programmes for Moldova. We believe that without such support, other programmes will be severely impaired.

At present only limited finance is available from the development banks for investing in police equipment. We have heard the argument that items such as speed cameras, police vehicles or uniforms are not investments, as they provide no measurable economic rate of return. We would argue that this is short-sighted and wrong. The Georgian example has shown that early investment in road policing has yielded a large and continuous income stream for public revenues.

There are substantial costs associated with failing to make such investments. Road casualty reduction cannot succeed if not backed up by proper enforcement. Corruption and lack of investment in road policing in Moldova makes enforcement difficult, contaminates road crash data, hampers strategic planning and performance monitoring, and builds public contempt for road traffic laws and policing. With planned modernization of the road infrastructure in Moldova it will be essential to ensure good road safety enforcement to prevent growing numbers of road deaths and injuries and a consequent enormous cost to public revenues – in 2009 costing in excess of \$300 million a year, around 3% of GDP. Investment in road traffic enforcement in Uganda and New Zealand not only saved lives and injuries, but returned substantial money to the public in addition to the human tragedies averted.

Current advice to international travellers to Moldova includes warnings about the high risk of road crashes, deaths and injuries, poor driver behaviour, poor police enforcement, a lack of police equipment and the prevalence of petty bribery. We believe that tackling these issues will be important for the future of Moldovan tourism, trade and inward investment, and will contribute to a positive image of Moldova abroad.

Ensuring proper resources for road policing is, in our view, vital for the Government's anti-corruption strategy targeting police and weeding out corruption more generally – objectives shared by the donor agencies. We have seen that, globally, the police are the most frequent recipients of bribery. People see and have contact with road police on almost a daily basis. Where bribery is common, this has a corrosive impact on public confidence in all public servants, including those in local and central government:

“Roads, arguably, represent the public space shared and used most commonly by the population comprising pedestrians, cyclists, passengers, and drivers. Roads facilitate our mobility and underpin the smooth functioning of our lives... Understandably, ordinary users wish to feel reassured of their safety and security when using the roads, and that compliance with the laws of the road is enforced. For this, they are most likely to look to the roads police. So by default, roads policing enjoys an elevated profile among the public, and one might contend that for many it is the public face of the police.”³⁴

Properly resourcing road policing and eradicating petty bribery will help to build confidence in public institutions and the rule of law.

Finally, the leakage of resources through bribery has cost the Moldovan people an enormous amount – money that could be devoted to saving lives, improving standards of living, and creating a professional road police force which can provide good careers for future generations. Proper investment now to stem the leakage from bribery and underpin road casualty reduction should, in future, pay for itself many times over.

³⁴ Claire Corbett, *Op Cit.*, p. 131.

Recommendations by Georgian Delegation

In May 2010, as members of a joint group of UK and Georgian police delegations, we visited the Moldovan road police to help improve their enforcement practice and abolish corruption within the system. During the visit members of the delegation identified the operation of the road police - and in particular problems of inadequate equipment, corruption and weak enforcement - as major obstacles for implementing effective safety enforcement. In Moldova weak governmental institutions are in charge of road safety. Thus the improvement of these structures is needed to achieve progress. Strong road police that would be free from political and other influences, effective governance and anti-corruption measures are the spheres that, in our view, need to be addressed.

Corruption also influences the effectiveness of auto technical inspection in Moldova, the issuing of driving licenses and the insurance system. It was obvious to us that corruption within the road police leads to a general lack of respect for road laws and law enforcement bodies in society. This also used to be the case in Georgia. Reform of the Georgian patrol police began with reform of the Soviet-style Traffic Police (GAI), for which an absence of trust among the population, a completely corrupt system and completely ineffective performance were typical. In 2003 trust toward the road police was around 10%; today it is around 80%.

Maintaining road safety is a complex issue, involving continual monitoring of the situation on the roads, the prevention of emergency situations, simplifying the issuance of driving and registration licenses, transparency and the creation of an effective system for collecting data. For this reason, during the visit by representatives of the Georgian patrol police in Moldova, care was taken to assess of the circumstances of the road police as well as essential registration and analytical services. The Georgian delegation included representatives with expertise in all three areas, and this gave us the ability to assess the existing situation from different perspectives. Members of the delegation observed the potential for corruption and have identified areas requiring special attention for future action by the Moldovan government.

The recommendations of the Georgian delegation can be divided into systemic and institutional recommendations. Systemic recommendations are mainly within the competence of government while institutional recommendations refer more specifically to the regulation of the road police and MIA agencies. In making our recommendations, we have highlighted the main points where the reforms carried out in Georgia might be relevant to Moldova.

Lessons from the Georgian experience

Patrol Police Department

In the Republic of Georgia, at the early stage of reform it was necessary to invest heavily in the new Patrol Police. Everything was done to rebuild the police force from scratch. 16,000 traffic policemen were fired in one day. Some of these were later retained, but they had to undergo an open, transparent, and objective recruitment process. From the beginning all applicants have gone through a three step test in order to join the police; baseline training for those selected, exams and on-the-job training. New staff were supplied with modern vehicles and special equipment, dressed in nice uniforms and provided with a strict code of conduct. As a result of these reforms, a new Patrol Police force was created, with higher salaries, full insurance benefits, new uniforms, new vehicles, new equipment, a new code of ethics and higher motivation. After the reforms, Patrol Police now consists of approximately 3,320 police, 13% of whom are females. All of them, together with 5,200 of their family members, receive free health insurance and other benefits. This transformation of the police would not have been successful without the aid of an active PR campaign and media support for the reforms.

The Patrol Police have become very effective in ensuring road safety, controlling petty crimes and building bridges between the police and society. The group created by the experts and the authority has defined the activities, tasks, service structure and competence of new patrol service:

- Today the Patrol police are an autonomous unit inside the MIA and beyond the control of the local police administration;
- Protectionism, both at work and toward the civilian population, was eliminated;
- Traffic police integrity has been improved under the authority of Patrol Police Department;
- Traffic police are not allowed to stop moving vehicles without violating traffic movement rules, to ambush vehicles from a covered position in order to catch violators, or to communicate with a citizen without first coming out of their police vehicles;
- Modern central and regional radio stations and a special '022' central service center were installed;
- A single united database was created within the MIA.

The patrol police were given defined territorial areas of activity. Cities and highways were divided into square districts depending upon the

criminal situation and other local factors. This pattern still applies. Each square is served by one patrol crew. The crew consists of one patrol automobile and two patrol inspectors.

One of the steps towards modernization was installing cameras on Georgian roads. Since 2007, more than 1,000 cameras have been installed in the largest cities of Georgia, thus contributing to improved traffic movement on roads and the prevention of crimes.

Various anti-corruption measures were carried out during reformation:

- Raising salaries and offering a competitive social security package;
- Policemen do not have direct contact with money – they just issue ticket fines;
- There is a regular rotation of policemen among different districts.

In addition to the abovementioned measures, corruption among Patrol Police is prevented by internal monitoring activities of the MIA:

- A General Inspection unit of the MIA ensures professional standards are maintained;
- Special Monitoring Units within the police force keep a particular eye on Patrol Police activities.

As has been mentioned, the result of these reforms has been an enormous shift in public attitudes to the police: public trust in policing rose from 10% in 2003 to 80% in 2008.

Service Agency

Prior to the reforms, one of the main sources of corruption among the traffic police was the unit responsible for issuing various licenses and registering vehicles. During the reformation, these functions were transferred to a newly-created Service Agency. This new agency is independent from the traffic police and responsible for:

- Registration of vehicles
- Issuing driving licenses
- Legal status of vehicles and individuals
- Registration of weapons

The main improvements implemented in the Agency were:

- All divisions in the country are connected to one network;
- They have modern equipment and technologies;

- Bureaucratic barriers were reduced and a “one window” principle was implemented;
- A central united database was created, reducing the time it takes to process applications from several weeks to several minutes.

Anticorruption measures were also carried out in the Service Agency and included:

- Increasing salaries and offering a competitive social security package;
- Theoretical exams for driving licenses are conducted electronically and monitored from a central terminal;
- Every exam room is equipped with video monitoring and recording systems;
- Official fees for fast-track services and personalized license plates were fixed;
- There was a reduction in bureaucratic barriers and therefore of potential sources of corruption.

Other Reforms

In 2006, another new police unit – the Neighborhood Police - was established. It has become an important connecting chain between the police and society, helping to prevent crime (especially juvenile crime). The Neighborhood Police work closely with the public on a community level. In contrast with the Patrol Police, their work is more proactive and preventative, rather than reactive.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs itself has been equipped with modern technologies, communications and facilities to safeguard national security. For example:

- The Patrol Police are equipped with on-board computers with access to the database of Driving Licenses and drivers’ traffic offenses;
- Modern technologies of information exchange have been introduced uniting regional stations across the country;
- The problem of updating and the full computerization of databases was addressed and new system was created;
- The Border Police are equipped with modern technologies, communications and facilities to protect Georgia’s land and sea borders;
- The Police Forensic Division is provided with 50 computerized portable laboratories;

- Police departments and offices have been modernized and designed (through the use of open-plan offices and glass walls/partitions) to encourage an atmosphere of transparency and openness.

Today the Patrol Police is the most advanced ministry of the country in terms of electronic governance and information management systems. The improved material-technical base and working environment has significantly increased the motivation and morale of employees.

From the very beginning of these reforms, the necessity of maintaining professional and educated staff was recognized. Special attention was attached to improving the police and security academies responsible for training employees of the Ministry. The old Security Academy was abolished. The Police Academy was reorganized, equipped with the newest equipment and literature, and new training courses were introduced. With these reforms the system of recruiting and educating police has absolutely changed. The personnel of the Ministry now continuously undergo training at the Police Academy.

Recommendations for Moldova

Systemic Recommendations

For successful implementation of anti-corruption reforms the following steps are necessary as a first stage:

- Fighting against corruption and generally the issue of road safety must be political priorities for the Moldovan government. However the resources needed for tackling these problems currently do not exist, and correspondingly government departments find it difficult to take responsibility for addressing these issues. It is widely known that it is impossible to get resources if there is no political will in the government for allocating funds from the budget for road safety. The will of the political leadership of the country is essential to start the process of reform, and must be persistent during the reform programme.
- The traffic police of Moldova have a deficit of appropriately skilled and qualified staff and modern technical utilities; their salaries are low and they have no system of social protection. It is necessary to create a concrete anti-corruption program aimed at the traffic police with criteria for examining their effectiveness and evaluating individual traffic police officers; along with the provision of a proper material-technical base and financial sources for the traffic police force. In parallel with fighting against corruption within the law enforcement agencies, a significant rise in salaries should be initiated and a new system of bonuses and promotion - with a competitive social security package - should be introduced.
- In Moldova, as it was in Georgia, strong political and public support is most important for reaching ambitious goals and eradicating corruption on the roads. Parliamentarians - together with the government - must be engaged in the ongoing process of improving the road safety strategy, activities and goals. In the context of road safety public opinion is the biggest stimulus for the formation of political will: it is always easier for governments to include road safety in their priorities if there is public consent and awareness. For this reason the active coverage of planned reforms through media sources, social advertising and a broad engagement of different layers of Moldovan society is crucial for building support for the reform process.
- The preparation and creation of a new statute and normative base for the new traffic police is recommended. In our view the patrol police should be an autonomous unit inside the Ministry for Internal Affairs and beyond the control of local police administrations or other units, eliminating the risk of protectionism at work or in relations with civilians.
- A new training program and curriculum for traffic police, and the preparation of all candidates and staff through this program should be introduced in the Moldovan police academy.

- Traffic police must be independent from interference in carrying out their work, including from high government offices, parliament and other official bodies. We recommend:
 - Abolishing VIP car plates and signal lights used by public officials;
 - The separation of the traffic police from issuing driving permissions and the car registration system.

The current government in Moldova is especially concerned about the transparency, quality and effectiveness of the traffic police. In order to achieve this, it is also necessary to eradicate corruption. Road safety must be a national priority with attention to strategic planning, coordination and adequate resources. Correspondingly, bilateral and multilateral donors must make a priority of road safety and be engaged in supporting good governance and anti-corruption measures. Moldova deserves this support.

Institutional Recommendations: The Traffic Police

As we have said, for reform to be successful, essential material, technical and financial resources must be allocated by the Moldovan authorities and by the donor community. This means investing properly in a professional police force. Without this investment, anti-corruption measures will not work.

We believe the status of a reformed traffic police force - its activities, tasks, structure and competence - must have a defined legal basis. In the view of the Georgian delegation it is desirable that the reformed police are included as an independent unit within the MIA. In addition, the place and role of the police within law enforcement structures of the state should be clearly regulated. We feel the Georgian model should be adopted, whereby police patrols have defined districts where they work both in cities and on highways. These areas should be defined professionally according to the local criminological situation, the intensity of movement, the number of road accidents, the size of population and other specific characteristics. Ideally, these areas should each be allocated specific patrol crews consisting of two traffic police officers and one patrol car. This increases the visibility of the local police and thus makes corruption less likely.

New regulations for the traffic police must also clearly define the rights and obligations of the patrol officer, aspects of their relations with civilians and drivers, the correct procedures for stopping and checking drivers violating the rules, as well as administrative measures for handling violations. Activities that may damage the image of the police must be strictly forbidden - for example, ambushing vehicles, officers communicating with civilians without getting out of their police cars, sleeping on the job, etc.

Training is vital. It is necessary to create a curriculum so that candidates for the traffic police will be re-qualified in the training centre and new applicants will be properly qualified. The educational program must include a broad curriculum encompassing all the legislation of importance to the patrol officer, the regulation of patrolling, road safety legislation and road regulations, police ethics, etc.

A review of police numbers and staffing is also necessary along with new recruitment procedures and training. A proper staff schedule must be created and affirmed on the basis of an analysis of needs. Personnel for the traffic police must be selected on a fair and open basis according to the candidate's education, professionalism, personal characteristics and the successes achieved during their previous work experience. During the selection of personnel and possibility of protectionism must be excluded.

A new, professional police force should be given new status and conditions. It is desirable to create uniforms, in consistence with the seasons, that will be different from the old uniforms visually as well as stylistically to help improve morale and confidence. They must be given out to police officers without delay. Moreover, salaries of the traffic police must be higher in comparison with existing salaries and should be increased gradually following the economic development of the country. Along with this, police should benefit from social protection and this should be foreseen for all traffic police personnel.

From what we viewed while visiting police stations in Moldova, for the success of the reform it will be necessary to create normal conditions for the traffic police. The vehicle fleet and auto park needs to be refreshed. The daily limit of petrol for the patrol cars must be defined according to the policing needs (and specifically the requirements of each patrol district) and must be provided daily without delay. It is also desirable to change radically the color of the patrol cars. The patrol cars must be equipped with flashers, loud speakers, radio transmitters, on-board computers and other essential equipment. For increasing the quality of work, enhancing control and monitoring potential corruption it is desirable to install audio-video recording systems in the patrol cars.

The installation of central and regional radio stations is needed for effective and coordinated work. The central database of the MIA must be available for all units on duty and also for police officers patrolling in crews. It is necessary to include an investigation unit in the structure of traffic police that will investigate road accidents and other incidents including criminal cases related to road policing.

The creation of a monitoring service within the traffic police is necessary for preventing disciplinary and other types of violations by policemen. This service should conduct continuous reviews of the work of traffic police personnel, reveal any violators, investigate violations and present recommendations for disciplinary penalties. It should also analyze the work of the traffic police, maintain statistics and help to plan the future activities of the traffic police. In addition, the state anti-corruption service and a general inspection department of the MIA

should be responsible for the fight against corruption and other kinds of crime in the ranks of traffic police, as well maintaining professional standards of policing.

Professional discipline must be strictly maintained. The patrol officer must always be personally neat and the uniform and equipment must always be in order. The rules of subordination must be strictly respected. Traffic police must be polite towards civilians and authorities. Successful officers must be systematically rewarded and promoted, and those who violate professional standards must be punished. Protectionism must be eradicated within the service as well as during contacts with the civilians.

It is necessary for attitudes towards the traffic police to change - both in the society and among the traffic police personnel. The reformed traffic police must be presented with an absolutely new image. That is why it is necessary to replace the old uniform with a new one, the old patrol cars and their colors with new ones. To assist the process and build popular support for the reforms, the public should be fully informed throughout and the reform program should have broad coverage in media sources.

Relations of the traffic police officers with civilians must be crucially changed. In order to gain more public trust, it is desirable as part of the reform that the traffic police become responsible for the fight against street crime and also for the maintenance of civil order. They must be also responsible for providing appropriate assistance to civilians (for example, helping those who have lost their way, assisting with a damaged car and so on). Consideration should even be given to changing the name “traffic police” to a new title.

Institutional Recommendations: Driving Licenses and Vehicle Registration

After analyzing the process of issuing driving licenses and activities connected to the registration of vehicles by the appropriate services of Moldova, we consider it necessary to carry out the following reforms that would simplify procedures and increase the quality of service for civilians:

The material-technical base of the system is outdated. We noted that the buildings used by these services are outdated. The same can be said of the office equipment and vehicles used by these services; some of which are damaged and need to be changed. The computer technologies used by the services do not meet modern standards. Practical exams for obtaining driving licenses are conducted with soviet-era, damaged vehicles in grounds that are not correspondingly equipped and organized, thus impeding proper and objective testing the person’s knowledge and skills. It must be also noted that the low number of vehicles available for practical exams prevents effective testing. Finally, care must be taken to ensure there are no opportunities

for corruption among examiners – for example, by introducing cameras in the examination rooms and other checks.

We observed that the issuance of driving licenses to civilians and the registration of vehicles is carried out according to the person's place of registration. This is unlikely to be convenient for members of the public. For example, to receive a driving license or register a vehicle the applicant has to collect the appropriate documents from different services in a variety of locations - possibly far from his residence - and then present these documents to his place of registration. In our view this is a tiresome and prolonged process that leads to unnecessary additional costs and delays. Civilians should be able to be served effectively and without obstacles wherever they live by means of a unified electronic database. We believe that, given the size of Moldova and its population, the introduction of such an innovation would be both possible and desirable.

By linking data held by different agencies, vehicle registration could be made much more efficient. For example, currently in Moldova a person interested in registering a vehicle must present a number of documents required by law, collected from different institutions, confirming that no obstacles exist for registration. The applicant must address each institution and search for the needed documents, complicating the process of registration and adding to costs. A unified system of electronic circulation and linking of legal documents would greatly simplify the process, enabling the registration services to gain the necessary information about vehicles or their owners without delay. It would also inform them about any changes in status, legal obligations of the owners and obstacles for registration. An electronic exchange of data would mean that the "one window principle" could be practically implemented so that civilians will not have to address a variety of different agencies in order to register a vehicle, thus saving them time and expenditure while providing a quality service.

We would like to note separately a further issue connected to the procedures for customs clearance and the initial registration of vehicles for import or export in Moldova. For customs clearance, physical or legal entities have to pass quite difficult procedures in addition to the procedures required by the registration services in order to register or unregister a vehicle. In practice, customs clearance and vehicle registration services commonly carry out similar procedures and use partly identical data: for example both services carry out an examination of the vehicle and compare the vehicle's documents with those held by the owner. It would be advisable to carry out customs and registration procedures according to the "one window principle." This would make the service both quicker and more effective. This practice was introduced in Georgia quite successfully, and as a result the import and export of vehicles and their registration is carried out almost simultaneously in a procedure lasting only 15-20 minutes.

These reforms could reduce opportunities for corruption while at the same time improving services to applicants. Improved services are popular with applicants, helping to build public support for reforms.

Concluding Remarks

Both the delegations from the Republic of Georgia and the UK believe there is political will in Moldova to address the problem of corruption and ensure good road safety enforcement. A vicious cycle has set in whereby a chronic lack of investment in road policing has led to poor police performance, poor conditions of work, encouraged a culture where petty bribery is acceptable, and undermined public support for investment in policing. This state of affairs is not unique to Moldova - it applies in many other police forces around the world.

All countries suffer from police corruption, including the UK and Republic of Georgia. What is important is to put in place policies to make corruption less likely and tackle cases effectively.

In Moldova there is a need for investment to improve equipment and conditions of work, boost road police morale, promote an ethical police culture, and ensure high quality training backed by fair recruitment. Opportunities for corruption and bribery could be reduced through the introduction of modern equipment and secure systems to relieve the road police from the need to take money for fines. Management and supervision needs to be strengthened, with better systems for monitoring corruption along with proactive investigation to improve individual accountability. Independent oversight of policing is important to guard against the danger of a culture of corruption breeding.

A key strategy will be to promote positive road policing linked to partnership with local communities. Having a positive role to play in casualty reduction helps to boost police morale, improve relations with the public and reduce the likelihood of corruption. Enforcement combined with community involvement is also the most effective way to reduce road deaths and injuries.

We are conscious that this report has been ambitious in covering a number of areas which will require further investigation and analysis. Our aim has been to point to areas where reform is needed, rather than to set out the details of these reforms. We recommend that further work should be undertaken to develop a potential reform programme. During the course of our visits offers of help and assistance were made by the Georgian Ministry for Internal Affairs, the Police Federation of England and Wales, the World Bank's RoadPOL initiative, the Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport, and many others, should this be needed.

We were impressed by the high priority placed on the issue of road safety by the Moldovan Government and the commitment - from all we met - to tackle corruption. We believe that, with this level of commitment and proper resourcing by the Government and the donor community, reform will be possible.

Annex: The Service Agency in Georgia

Nowadays a legal entity of public law, the Service Agency of the MIA in Georgia is responsible for driver licensing, vehicle registration and coordination over the customs clearance of vehicles. It may be of interest to the Moldovan authorities to note the other legal functions of the Service Agency, which include:

- Issuing permits for purchasing, registering and transporting civil firearms including for sporting activities, and for transporting any arms or weapons;
- Issuing licenses for firearm use, hunting or shooting galleries;
- Providing ballistic expertise on arms, certifying the legal status of arms (including writing them off and conducting a register of arms);
- The registration of vehicle leasing and the issuance of registration numbers;
- Manufacturing, printing and issuing license number plates;
- Issuing driving licenses for a variety of vehicles (e.g. tractors);
- Issuing international driving licenses;
- Issuing reference documents on convictions, on the legal status of a vehicle, on any legal limitations on the vehicle (including removing the noted limitations);
- Confirming the authenticity of signatures (in three languages, facilitating transactions abroad) for both sides of an agreement to transfer vehicle ownership or registration numbers;
- On request from the declaring side, filing declarations for vehicles required for customs processing and/or providing the customs service with information in connection with customs processing;
- Carrying out a number of other duties set out under Georgian legislation.

As a result of the reforms carried out in Georgia, including these functions under one unit gave significant positive results; most importantly, the quality of service to the public has been improved. Previously lengthy procedures and the many bureaucratic barriers caused justified public dissatisfaction. Delays and frustrations for the public have been considerably decreased. At the same time the mechanisms of control – reducing opportunities for corruption - have been enhanced. The “one window principle” extends to having representatives of different agencies, including customs, tax-offices and insurance organizations, located in every unit of the Service Agency. For convenience,

there are also banking services under the same roof. A person who comes to the Service Agency can get an insurance policy, accomplish any customs or tax obligations, pay fines, obtain services from representatives of any the agencies, visit the bank or present documents all without leaving the building.

The service is equipped and organized with modern buildings and techniques. Every unit of the Agency is provided with high class new vehicles.

The Service Agency has its own internet server that guarantees the qualitative and secure functioning of its electronic base. In the course of its work the Agency has the right to create, receive, keep and issue any document (either in paper, electronic, or as archival material) required by law. It also can use the system of electronic circulation of documents and electronic signatures in its procedures, as electronic documents and their copies have the same legal value as paper documents. Electronic bookkeeping by the Service Agency enables employees of the Agency to access the databases of different state institutions (the MIA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice) immediately for any necessary data. As a result of electronic bookkeeping, the public are not obliged to present material documents related to their applications. As a result, provision of any kind of service by the Service Agency is carried out in around 15-20 minutes.

Electronic systems have enabled a series of innovations in the activities of the Service Agency. For example, it is possible for a potential car buyer to discover complete information about the legal status of the vehicle, or to choose and reserve a desired state license plate on the web-page of the Service Agency. The same web-page enables a person to test his knowledge of traffic rules or do practice exercises for the theoretical exam for the driving test. Authorized mortgage agents as well as notaries can carry out mortgage registrations or abolish mortgages, etc., directly from their offices using the system of electronic circulation of documents.

The Service Agency carries out inspection of vehicles locally and may carry out the procedures needed for registration of a vehicle by sending Agency employees to the place of residence of the person interested in registration; In either case the process of serving civilians is systematically observed. If a problem is discovered, the causes of the problem are identified and eradicated, and if necessary legal remedies are also undertaken.

It is worth noting other aspects of the services provided by the Service Agency, for example:

On request from an individual, the Agency is authorized to carry out customs inspections and declarations on vehicles for import, export, or customs storage following the "one window principle." The procedure of customs clearance begins with expertise. The expert of the Agency checks the given vehicle and its customs documentation. The expert makes a thorough visual inspection and electronically identifies

all relevant data on the vehicle. As a result of such expertise, the registration of stolen vehicles or those used in criminal activities is practically excluded. These activities are recorded electronically in special customs and vehicle registration programs which enable employees of the vehicle registration service to carry out customs clearances, as well as register and issue vehicles with state license plates and technical passports, in just 15-20 minutes.

Similarly, changes in vehicle registration begin with the visual inspection of a vehicle along with an electronic record of the visual inspection with a unique reference number. The vehicle registration number is confirmed and is automatically included in this procedure. The owner of the vehicle presents the unique reference number to the registrar who, on the basis of information provided by the owner, fills out an electronic application about any changes made in the vehicle's registration data. Other information – such as tax obligations, the legal status of the vehicle and legal obligations of the owner - is automatically reflected electronically in the registration base and this enables the registrar to check immediately any relevant issues. In case of a legal entity participating in the registration process (for example a person with representative authority, a registered bankrupt, a liquidator or the Public Prosecutor's Office), information from the Enterprise Register about the legal entity is obtained electronically. So long as there are no obstacles found, appropriate changes in the registration data base and the issuance of a registration license (technical passport) are immediate. In total, the registration procedures take only 5-10 minutes.

The unified registration database makes it possible to register vehicles, etc., wherever the vehicle is from or the applicant resides. Both the buyer and seller can address the registration services in different cities simultaneously, and on the basis of a joint application carry out a transfer of ownership and reregistration.

As a result of changes carried out recently a "card of transferring right" has been introduced. With this document the owner will have the right to de-register a vehicle without going to the registration service. It will also be possible to define the person who is authorized to manage ownership of the vehicle without the need for a notary, and the buyer is conferred the right to register the bought vehicle without participation of the seller in the registration procedures. There will also be a right for the individual to give authority to someone else to carry out a vehicle registration on their behalf.

A core function of the Service Agency is to conduct tests and issue driving licenses. A person can pass the theoretical driving exam using 8 different languages. Individuals are admitted to take the exam as soon as their documentation is received, without waiting in a queue. The theoretical exam is conducted in specially accommodated exam rooms equipped with computers with touch screens. Everything is organized in a manner to help the applicant feel calm and concentrate.

When an individual passes the exam successfully they can immediately take the practical exam. Practical exams are organized in special

squares in every appropriate unit of the Agency. Individuals may apply to take their exams wherever is convenient, whatever their place of residence. These squares completely meet modern international standards. Practical exams are undertaken using the vehicles provided by the Agency, and these cars are equipped to completely meet the established demands for exam vehicles. Each vehicle includes a special computer with the help of which an examiner can observe electronically the process of the exam and its results.

There are also considerable innovations in the process of issuing permits for purchasing and registering firearms. Nowadays the registration of firearms is differentiated into separate categories and this has significantly simplified the control and registration of firearms and information on arms circulation. Before issuing permits for carrying or keeping firearms the applicant is thoroughly examined. The existing electronic database makes it possible to reveal, timely and effectively, any impediments that, by law, could be considered a basis for refusing a permit.

A further function of the Agency is to offer a secure mail and messenger service. This includes the secure handling of special correspondence, parcels, documentation, industrial products, samples, securities and other items or loads that require special treatment. Couriers are provided with modern vehicles, including some with cross-country capacity, which make it possible to deliver to any area of Georgia without delay.

Delegations and Programme Participants

From Republic of Moldova:

Col. Gheorghe Botnariuc, Head, Moldovan Road Police

Ilie Bricicaru, Deputy Head, Drivers' Documentation Department, Ministry of Information Technologies and Communication

Viorel Bulimaga, Secretary, National Road Safety Council, Road Police Department

Serghei Diaconu, Counsellor to the Minister of State

Sandu Ghidirim, World Bank Moldova Country Office

Viorel Mihaila, Chief of General Anticorruption Department, Centre for Combating Economic Crimes and Corruption

Victor Neagu, World Bank Moldova Country Office

Serghei Rotari, Deputy Chief, Road Police Department, Ministry for Internal Affairs

Anatol Rusica, Chief of the Public Security Division, Road Police Department

Iurie Untilov, Chief of Section, Road Police Department, Ministry for Internal Affairs

From Republic of Georgia

Giorgi Grigalashvili, Director of Patrol Police Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Gela Kvashilava, Deputy Director, Information and Analytical Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Giorgi Mindiashvili, Head of Legal Unit, Service Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Alexander Okitashvili, Deputy Director, Patrol Police Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs

Joni Shekrladze, Deputy Head of Monitoring Unit, Patrol Police Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs

From the United Kingdom:

Sgt. John Giblin, Chairman, Sergeants' Central Committee, Police Federation of England and Wales

Inspector Alan Jones, Lead on Road Policing and Chairman of the Professional Development Subcommittee, Police Federation of England and Wales

Emma MacLennan, Director, EASST

Sir Keith Povey, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for England and Wales 2002-2005, founding Member, World Bank's RoadPOL network



**Eastern Alliance for Safe
and Sustainable Transport**

EASST, the Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport, is an alliance of campaigners working in Eastern Europe to make roads safe now and for the future. EASST's aim is to save lives and prevent injuries on the roads, and to make roads greener – more sustainable - for future generations.

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For more information, visit the EASST website: www.easst.co.uk