



The archaeological and tourist complex, Old Orhei

Orhei Rayon, Republic of Moldova

General overview

Orhei Rayon (district) is one of the 39 territorial administrative units of the Republic of Moldova. Located in the centre of the country, it covers a total area of 122.83 km². The Rayon consists of 75 localities, which are organized into 38 municipalities, including Orhei city, and 37 villages (communes). The town of Orhei is located in the centre of Orhei Rayon, 50 km north-east of Chisinau, the capital of the Republic of Moldova.

Since half of the territory is covered by arable land, the economy of Orhei Rayon is based on agricultural activities. These focus primarily on growing vegetables and fruits, cultivating cereal crops and raising livestock. The trend in agricultural tourism (agritourism) has been increasing in recent years.

On 1 January 2017, the population of the region counted 124 802, 62% of which was of working age. Population density was 102 inhabitants/km². The evolution of the demographic indicators for the latest five years is characterized by a continuous decrease in the population: a drop of 800 was registered in 2017 as compared to 2013 (implying a 0.6% reduction of the stable population). In 2016, life expectancy at birth had reached 69.3 years and the trend is increasing.

It is lower, however, than life expectancy for the whole country, which was 72.2 years in the same year. The gender gap in life expectancy is quite high; women outlive men by 8.9 years in Orhei Rayon (1).

Overall mortality in the Rayon is similar to that at the national level, cardiovascular diseases being the leading cause (57%), followed by cancers (14%), disorders of the digestive system (13%), etc. Many of these deaths can be attributed to alcohol use, tobacco smoking and unhealthy diet (2).

The health system of the Republic of Moldova is organized according to the principles of universal health coverage, which include access to basic health services, equity and solidarity in health-care financing. The health system includes public agencies and authorities involved in the provision and administration of health services, as well as a mix of public and private medical facilities. In the Republic of Moldova, health insurance is mandatory and covered from a single pool of funds combining payroll contributions and budget transfers. The health system, which is governed by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, is funded jointly by the State and the National Health Insurance Company.

Medical assistance is provided to the population of Orhei Rayon through a wide network of public medical institutions. Currently, the population benefits from health-care services provided by the Orhei Rayon Hospital, which has a capacity of 325 beds, six emergency health-care units and 65 autonomous, self-financing, non-profit primary-health-care (PHC) institutions contracted by the National Health Insurance Company.

Public health services in the Rayon are coordinated by the Orhei Center of Public Health, which is currently responsible to and financed by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection. As of 2017, the Center is part of the National Public Health Agency, which falls under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection.

A decreasing trend has been registered in the number of medical personnel in medical institutions, especially at the PHC level and particularly in rural districts. At the same time, a number of private medical institutions across the country provide services in the respective rayons. In Orhei Rayon, the Center of Medical Diagnosis, dental clinics and gynecology clinics, among others, contribute to increasing population access to medical services. All private medical institutions must adhere to the protocols, guidelines and recommendations of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection.

Public health is among the priorities of local public administration. At the end of 2016, the Orhei Rayon Council endorsed the Orhei Rayon Public Health Action Plan 2016–2020: Health

2020, the main objectives of which are to reduce the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and the major modifiable NCD risk factors. To this end, the public authorities of Orhei city increased local taxes on tobacco and alcohol products. This means that companies selling these harmful products have to charge twice as much for them as for other products.

As part of the memorandum of collaboration in the field of health and medical sciences signed by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Health and Care Services of Norway for 2015–2017, Orhei Rayon and the Municipality of Drammen, Norway, initiated a joint project on public health at the local level. The aim of the project is to reduce the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and drug use among youth (14–18 years) in the Rayon by raising their awareness of the dangers of the use of these products.

The health and harmonious development of youth comprise one of the key objectives of the strategic development programme of Orhei Rayon. Since 2016, new stadiums, sports grounds and children's playgrounds have been built in various parts of the Rayon, including Orhei city.

With the support of development partners, new youth centres have been opened; these include the Youth-Friendly Health Center founded within the framework of the Moldovan–Swiss Healthy Generation Project to promote youth-friendly health services.



Strengths

The strengths of Orhei Rayon are:

- ✓ its strong intersectoral collaboration in the area of public health;
- ✓ its participation in collaborative projects, which enables not only an exchange of experience, but also the possibility of receiving support in the area of public health;
- ✓ the universal access of the population to basic medical services (PHC).



Aspirations

These are:

- ✓ to develop collaborative partnerships with other regions in European Union (EU) Member States;
- ✓ to exchange best practice in public health with other regions in EU Member States and launch new projects in this area;
- ✓ to introduce innovations in public health.



Challenges

In Orhei Rayon, the main challenges relate to increases in:

- ✓ the burden of NCDs, especially from cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes;
- ✓ the migration of the population to other countries;
- ✓ population ageing.



Potential areas of collaboration

Orhei Rayon would be interested in collaborating with other RHN participants on:

- ✓ NCD prevention and the reduction of NCD risk factors;
- ✓ projects related to public health, in particular NCD prevention and the reduction of NCD risk factors.



Working groups

Orhei Rayon is interested in participating in working groups on:

- ✓ environment;
- ✓ health systems/primary health care;
- ✓ the all-of-government approach/intersectoral action.



People active in the Regions for Health Network (RHN)

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References

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