



Moldova

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Formerly a part of Romania and of the area historically known as Basarabia, Moldova was incorporated into the Soviet Union at the close of World War II. Although the Republic of Moldova has been independent from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) since 1991, Russian forces have remained on the Moldovan territory east of the Dniester River supporting the Slavic majority population, mostly Ukrainians and Russians, who have proclaimed a 'Transnistria' republic.

The poorest nation in Europe, Moldova became the first former Soviet state to elect a Communist as its President in 2001.

Economy

Moldova is largely reliant on agriculture as its major source of revenue, enjoying a good climate and some of the best farming land in the world. However, it has few mineral deposits and imports almost all of its energy supplies from Russia, leaving it vulnerable to energy shortages after the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991. This led to a sharp industrial decline.

An ambitious reform effort after independence saw Moldova introduce a convertible currency, free interest rates and free prices, privatisation of land, and removal of export controls. The Government entered into agreements with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for promoting growth and reducing poverty. The economy returned to positive growth in 2000, and has grown consistently since then.

An increasing number of Moldovans are working abroad. Therefore, workers' remittances, at current rates, may soon equal gross foreign exchange earnings from all merchandise exports. However, the economy remains vulnerable to high fuel prices, poor weather, and the scepticism of foreign investors.

Competition Evolution and Environment

Moldova is currently Europe's poorest country. Within Europe, it is able to compete primarily due to the low wages paid for an often highly skilled labour force. However,

PROFILE	
Population:	3.559 million****
GDP (Current US\$):	7.001 billion****
Per Capita Income: (Current US\$)	1,980 (Atlas method)**** 3,319 (at PPP)**
Surface Area:	33,843 sq. km
Life Expectancy:	69 years***
Literacy (%):	99.1 (of ages 15 and above)*
HDI Rank:	113****
Sources: - Human development Report, UNDP 2012 - World Development Indicators Database, World Bank, 2011 (*) 2009 est (**) 2012 est (***) For the year 2012 (****) For the year 2011	

low labour costs do not protect Moldovan producers of consumer goods in the domestic market against increasing competition from imports. Neither exporters nor enterprises competing with imports get much help from the Government. Despite attempts to improve the competitiveness of the economic environment, the Government still maintains policies, which increase the cost of doing business and sap the country's competitive potential.

Yet the picture is by no means bleak. In a difficult environment, some of Moldova's enterprises manage to compete successfully, to survive and even prosper in competitive markets. The country's exports to the EU are gaining market share in growing and stable markets there.

Apparel producers are moving along the value-added path from just sewing, to cutting and sewing, and on to private label production.

The challenge for Moldova is to leverage emerging capacities, to raise productivity levels throughout the economy, and to improve the competitiveness of the

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country's producers, in domestic as well as export markets. Meeting that challenge demands a carefully articulated strategy, focusing on areas of economic activity that have a high payoff in terms of productivity gains.

Unlike other CIS countries, Moldova did not have any pre-USSR laws from which to draw upon, and was effectively starting from scratch in its evolution of a competition environment. Its first Competition Law – The Law 'Concerning Limitation of Monopolistic Activities and Development of Competition' was passed on May 01, 1992 (hereinafter referred to as the Anti-monopoly Law).

Competition Institutions and Regulations

The 1992 Anti-monopoly Law

The 1992 Anti-monopoly Law regulates the organisational and legal framework for the development of competition; provides measures for preventing, restricting and forbidding monopolies towards providing the necessary conditions for the creation and operation of the market economy in the Republic of Moldova. It excludes state monopolies from its jurisdiction.

State policy concerning facilitation of competition and restriction of monopolistic activities is the responsibility of the State Committee for Economic Reform (CER). The main tasks of the CER in the sphere of anti-monopoly regulations are:

- (i) to establish measures for developing market oriented relations on the basis of development of entrepreneurship and competition;
- (ii) to prevent, restrict and suppress monopolistic activities; and
- (iii) to monitor compliance with the Anti-monopoly Law.

The CER is entitled to impose penalties for violations of the law, including evasion of implementation or delayed implementation of the CER's orders, failure to submit necessary information to the CER, or submission of deliberately false information.

Entities or individuals can go to court to attempt to recover losses incurred as a result of monopolistic activities. The CER also has some authority to review cases filed by entrepreneurial entities, regulatory authorities and consumers' societies and unions, or to file cases itself. Similarly, entities may appeal to the courts against CER decisions.

The 2000 Law on Protection of Competition

On December 31, 2000, the Law No. 1103-XIV 'On Protection of Competition' (hereinafter – Law on Protection of Competition) was adopted. Many of provisions of the new Law reproduced provisions of the 1992 Anti-monopoly Law, though the latter one had not yet been abolished. The new Law on Protection of Competition regulated in more detail relations in the sphere of competition. It provided major definitions in the area

of competition and anti-monopoly policy and stipulated basic restrictions for economic subjects and state authorities in order to protect competition and system of state control in this sphere.

Chapter III of the Law on Protection of Competition stipulated provisions on anticompetitive actions. Article 5 of the Law stated that anti-competitive actions were the following:

- Monopolistic activities:
 - abuse of the dominant position in the market;
 - anticompetitive agreements between economic subjects;
- Unfair competition; and
- Activities of public authorities, which constrain competition.

A dominant position in the market was defined in Article 2 of the Law on Protection of Competition as an exclusive position of an economic actor in the market, which allows him alone or together with other economic actors to exert decisive influence upon general conditions of goods turnover in a certain market or to create obstacles for other economic subjects to enter the market. The share of an economic participant in the market in order to consider him as holding dominant position had to be not less than 35 percent.

The same article of the Law provided definition of unfair competition, which was understood as any actions of the economic participants directed towards getting unjustified advantages in their business activities, which breached legislative provisions on protection of competition and damage or could have damaged other economic participants or their business reputation.

Detailed provisions on abuse of dominant position in the market were contained in Article 6 of the Law on Protection of Competition. It stated that the actions of an economic participant with the dominant position in the market or of several economic participants holding in aggregate a dominant position, which had or could have had as a result the limitation of competition and/or infringement of other players and natural persons' interests. These actions included but were not limited to:

- obtusion of indubitably unprofitable or irrelevant conditions to contractors;
- compulsion of contractors to conclude a contract under conditions of purchasing (selling) of other goods or to refrain from purchasing/selling the goods from/to other economic participants;
- maintenance of artificial deficit of goods in the market;
- implementation of discriminating conditions, which put the contractors in a situation less favourable as compared to other economic participants;
- fixing the price limitations on reselling of the goods;
- putting obstacles in the way of entrance into the market for other economic participants;

Box 1: Prices Not a Major Problem, but Export Restrictions Hurt

The pricing regime in Moldova, as mentioned above, has been liberalised, but several goods and services remain subject to price controls, especially those produced in industries where State monopolies are permitted by law, such as electricity, heating, telecommunication services, land, transportation, and medical services. A number of ‘socially important’ goods are sold with a maximum commercial mark-up of 20 percent, including canned food for children, sunflower oil, dairy products, butter, flour, bread, drugs, and others.

State interference, though limited, does exist. Recent examples include interference in the grain market in 2001 through provisional restrictions on bakeries, and the initiative of regulating pricing on the basis of a law in 2001, when the Parliament was considering a draft of the Law on Prices. A recent initiative to restrict exports of sunflower seeds was aimed at protecting the interests of local sunflower processing companies.

Even with these constraints, price controls are not perceived by businesses as considerably constraining their operations. According to the Cost of Doing Business survey, about 70 percent of respondents do not perceive the state to be influencing prices. Those who do report state interference in price-setting, emphasise such mechanisms as ceilings on retail prices, restrictions on profitability, and minimum retail prices.

The business environment does appear to be competitive. According to another survey, 84 percent of firms report at least four competitors, and 76 percent have four or more suppliers. Sixteen percent of respondents see anti-competitive and informal practices as a ‘major’ constraint on business activity, similar to other CEE and CIS countries.

Source: ICA (2004), Moldova Investment Climate Assessment, World Bank and International Finance Corporation

- establishment of monopolistically low (predatory) prices;
- establishment of monopolistically high prices; and
- ungrounded refusal to conclude a contract with certain customers having possibility of producing or selling respective goods.

There were also certain restrictions in respect to the agreements resulting in limitation of competition. Such agreements were prohibited between:

- competitive (rival) economic participants possessing an aggregate share in the market more than 35 percent;
- non-competitive economic participants, one of which holding a dominant position in the market, and another one being his supplier or customer; and
- non-competitive economic participants, each of them holding a dominant position in the market of certain goods.

If such contracts had the signs of restraining competition, they could have been concluded with the permission of the CER.

Coordination of one economic participant’s activity with another, if it results in limitation of competition, was also prohibited.

The Law on Protection of Competition of 2000 provided the basis for creation of the National Agency on Protection of Competition. The Law stipulated a reference for such Agency.

The National Agency for Protection of Competition (hereinafter NAPC) has been established through the Parliament Decision No 21-XVI as of 16.02.07, as a

permanent authority in the public administration, with the status of a legal person, aiming at promoting the state’s policy in the competition protection domain, for the restriction and suppression of the anti-competitive activity of the companies, public administration authorities and for the control on the enforcement of the law on competition protection.

This law has also been abolished on September 14, 2012.

The 2012 Law on Competition

Because the Law on protection of competition was adopted in 2000, but NAPC founded in 2007, it was very difficult to implement this Law.

That is why in 2007 NAPC proposed a set of Amendments to the 2000 Competition Law. While NAPC commenced the implementation and enforcement of The Law on The Protection on Competition of 2000, enforcement powers were weak.

In 2008, however, a draft Law amending Law on competition of 2000 was approved by the Parliament but was not promulgated by the President.

Later, in 2010, NAPC started to draft a totally New Competition Law that it is in compliance with EU legislation, and in this process we were supported by the EU experts (Romania, Latvia, Austria) from the Twinning Project “Support to implementation and enforcement of competition and state aid policy”.

As a result of this, Law no. 183/2012 on competition (Law no. 183/2012) was enacted on July 11, 2012 and came into force on September 14, 2012.

Overall, the approach of Law no. 183/2012 to competition is considerably more complex than the one of the previous laws. The main competition issues, such as horizontal and vertical agreements as well as the abuse of dominant position have received in-depth attention from the Moldovan lawmaker. Furthermore, the new law transposes a number of European provisions in this area, bringing the legislation of Moldova one step closer to the European legal framework.

One of the novelties of Law no. 183/2012 is that it covers any conduct and agreements that affect or can affect the Moldovan market, including for example foreign agreements whose effects reach also the territory and market of Moldova (Art. 2 (4)).

Under the new law, fines can be of up to 5 percent of an undertaking's turnover.

Regarding economic concentrations, these must be notified to the Competition Council (new name of the NACP) if the cumulated turnover of the involved undertakings exceeds 25 million lei and at least two involved undertakings have each obtained within the Republic of Moldova a turnover exceeding 10 million lei in the year preceding the economic concentration operation.

Another amendment regards the threshold of dominance. If under the old law an undertaking was presumed dominant if it had a share of at least 35 percent on the relevant market, Law no. 183/2012 provides that an undertaking is presumed dominant when its market share exceeds 50 percent or if it has exclusive rights (such as rights assigned to it by a public authority).

Other changes refer to the attributions of the Competition Council, as well as to how notifications must be made to the Competition Council and how the relevant market is to be defined.

Last but not least, Law no. 183/2012 regulates unfair competition more extensively. Unfair competition is not anymore directly related to a dominant position as was the case under the former law. Currently, anyone regardless of their market position can be sanctioned for competing in an unfair manner. Furthermore, Law no. 183/2012 provides a broader range of acts that qualify as unfair competition (e.g., confusion, misappropriation of clientele, etc.).

The 2012 State Aid Law

On June 15, 2012, Law no. 139/2012 on state aid was adopted by the Moldovan Parliament. It shall enter into force on August 16, 2013.

Secondary legislation

Following the enactment of Law no. 183/2012 on competition and of Law no. 139/2012 on state aid, public

consultations are currently ongoing for the adoption of secondary legislation including regulations on market dominance and abuse of dominant position, on economic concentrations, on the analysis of technology transfer agreements, etc.

Sectoral Regulation

Telecommunications Sector

The last years of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century in Moldovan telecommunications market were marked with continuous evolution and development. Liberalisation of the market was declared as one of the main priority directions in this process. At the same time, there are still certain problems in regard to fulfilling the requirements of fair competitive market rules.

The evolution of the market was also marked with the development of legislation regulating the relations of different subjects in the sphere of telecommunications. The legislative and normative regulation of telecommunications market deals mostly with 2 main goals:

- to establish certain requirements in regard to the operators activities, technical requirements, licensing, etc.;
- to create necessary conditions for development of fair competition and liberalisation of the market.

The basic legislative act in the sphere of telecommunications is the Law # 520-XIII of July 07, 1995 "On Telecommunications" (hereinafter – the Law on Telecommunications). According to its Article 1, this Law sets forth the main rules and terms of activity in the field of telecommunication in Moldova, rights and commitments of the State, legal entities and individuals in the process of creation, administration, operation, maintenance and use of telecommunication facilities with the aim to provide all citizens of the Republic with rapid and efficient telecommunication services at reasonable prices, as well as ensure free access to public telecommunication services for all potential users, according to available facilities.

The Law provides that telecommunication networks can be owned by both state and private sector enterprises, thus providing equal opportunities for private and state owned companies to enter the market. Telecommunications facilities and networks, which constitute the state property, can be determined only by corresponding laws, regulations and Government decrees.

The Law on Telecommunications provides that the public authority, which implements the Government policy in the field of telecommunications and determines the telecommunications development strategy, shall be the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications. On the other hand, the authority, which regulates the activities in the field of telecommunications and ITs, is the National Regulatory Agency for Telecommunications and Informatics (NRATI).

Box 2: Competition in the Telecommunications Market in Moldova

Although the market of fixed telephony services in Moldova has a much longer history, it is the least competitive and developed. The main feature of this segment of the telecommunications is the actual monopolist position of the state owned company “Moldtelecom” SA. Moldtelecom was declared by the National Agency as operator with dominant position in the market. At the present moment, Moldtelecom holds monopoly in the market of international and interurban fixed telephone services. Moreover, it is still considered as an operator with dominant position in the market of local telephony. By December 31, 2003, in Moldova, thirteen companies were registered as authorised to provide fixed local telephony services. Nevertheless, only two of them – Moldtelecom and SC “Calea Ferata” provided such services.

Though Moldtelecom holds in fact a dominant position in the market of fixed telephony, it is still unable to provide these services to the entire population of the country. The index of telephone penetration per household is improving year by year. Nevertheless, half of the number of families do not have a telephone line at home. This situation is particularly grave in rural areas.

A different situation is observed in the market of mobile telephony. In this segment of the market, competition between different market participants exists. The market of mobile telephony was open in Moldova in 1997 when the exclusive right to provide GSM cell mobile services was granted to the company “Voxtel” SA. In 1998, this company launched the first GSM mobile telephony network in Moldova. In 1999, the second company, “Moldcell” SA was granted with the right to provide the

services of mobile telephony. It started to provide its services to population in 2002.

It is worth mentioning that, at the first stage of development of mobile telephony services market with only one operator, a very limited number of consumers requested the offered services. The situation has significantly changed since the second operator has entered into the market. Due to the decline in prices, more people were able to afford using the services of mobile telephony. It is noteworthy to show the changes in the number of subscribers of Voxtel and Moldcell during the years of their parallel activities. Whereas in 2000 and 2001, the number of subscribers was almost equal, during the following two years the number of Voxtel’s subscribers has significantly increased as compared to the number of Moldcell’s subscribers.

Thus, in 2003, the market of mobile telephony services is divided in the following proportion: Voxtel – 62 percent and Moldcell – 38 percent.

Despite the existence of competition in the market of mobile cellular telephony services, there is enough possibility for entrance of other companies into this market. On February 28, 2003, Moldtelecom was provided with the license to provide such services along with other operators. However, it has not yet launched any activities in this direction.

Beginning with 27.04.2007 “Voxtel” SA became “Orange Moldova”. On June 29, 2006, Moldtelecom obtained the licensee to provide CDMA 2000 cell mobile service.

Source: Alexei Ghertescu, Telecommunication Market in Moldova: Steps Towards Liberalisation and Competition; www.joensuu.fi/taloustieteet/ott/scandale/tarto/papers/alexei%20ghertescu.pdf

The Ministry of Information Technology and Communications carries out general management of different issues of telecommunications sphere, and the NRATI is a specialised state authority in telecommunications. It also regulates the fulfilment of legal requirements on competition by the participants in the telecommunications market. At the same time, the key issues of state policy in telecommunications are determined by the Parliament and the Government.

One of the key issues in regulation of telecommunications market is interconnection between the networks of different operators. The main act in this sphere is the Regulation on Interconnection (adopted by the National Agency Decision # 02 of March 13, 2002).

In accordance with paragraph 4.1 of the Regulation on Interconnection, any operator shall have the right to request

and obtain interconnection of its networks and services, with any other network or service of another operator in technically feasible points, under non-discriminatory and transparent terms and conditions.

When offering interconnection, every operator is obliged to offer inter-connection conditions that will ensure the integrity of the network, inter-operability and quality of services, promotion of efficiency and fair competition on the market, meeting to the utmost the end-user’s demand.

The Regulation on Inter-connection also provides a set of rules in order to ensure fulfillment of Competition Law requirements in case of interconnection with the networks of operators with dominant position in the market. On an annual basis, a market analysis is done to check on compliance with the Law.

The Law on Administrative Board the National Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications and Information Technology (ANRCETI) identifies the relevant markets and performs their analysis in order to identify whether the given market is or is not effectively competitive. The market analysis is also targeted at imposition, maintenance, modification or withdrawal of special preventive obligations to providers with significant market power on those markets. To implement these objectives, ANRCETI developed and approved the Regulations on Identification and Analysis of Relevant Electronic Communications Markets and Designation of Networks and/or Service Providers with Significant Market Power.

The relevant market is a market of electronic communications products and/or services, the nature of which justifies the imposition by law of special obligations. The Law provides that ANRCETI must perform relevant market analysis at least every two years.

Where as a result of the analysis it is found that a relevant market is not effectively competitive, ANRCETI will set, in compliance with the aforementioned Regulations the providers of electronic communications networks and/or services with significant market power on the given market. In this case, ANRCETI has the right to impose on such providers one or more obligations as provided by the Law on Electronic Communications.

The market analysis performed by ANRCETI consists of three stages:

1. Identification of relevant markets

During the first stage, ANRCETI identifies the markets susceptible to *ex-ante* regulation. In 2009, ANRCETI, by Administrative Board Decision no. 85 (doc. in state language) of April 28, 2009, defined the list of relevant markets of electronic communications networks and/or services in order to analyse them and determine whether the *ex-ante* obligations must be imposed. In the process of market identification, both the relevant EC recommendations and the specific national circumstances were taken into consideration.

Two distinct tools are applied by ANRCETI in the process of market identifications. By means of the Small but Significant and Non-transitory Increase in Price (SSNIP) test the regulator establishes the relevant product market and the geographical product market. Also, ANRCETI applied the test of the three criteria, recommended by the European Commission in order to determine whether the market is susceptible to *ex-ante* regulation.

The analysis performed for the identification of relevant markets and the draft decisions thereto are subject to public consultations.

2. The detailed analysis of relevant markets identification of providers with significant market power

At this stage, ANRCETI performs the detailed analysis of the identified relevant markets and assesses the degree of their competitiveness. Since the existence of providers with significant market power is equivalent with the competition being inefficient, ANRCETI analyses the relevant markets on basis of a set of criteria to determine whether there are providers with significant market power on those markets, identifies the competitive problems, including the potential ones and proposes remedies.

The detailed analysis of relevant markets and the draft decisions on designation of providers with significant market power on these markets are subject to public consultations. ANRCETI requires that the National Agency for Competition Protection (ANPC) provide their approval. The decisions on designation of providers with significant market power, approved by ANRCETI, are made publicly available and are sent to ANPC and providers concerned.

3. Imposition of special *ex-ante* obligations

In the third stage, ANRCETI establishes the set of special *ex-ante* obligations to be imposed on providers with significant market power on relevant markets, such as to contribute to the remediation of problems on those markets. The draft decisions on special *ex-ante* obligations to be imposed on providers with significant market power on relevant markets are subject to public consultations. ANRCETI must provide justification for its decisions regarding the obligations imposed on providers, including whether the obligations are proportionate to the identified risks.

If an operator appears to have exercised decisive influence on a particular services market, this operator is declared, upon the National Agency's proposal, by the authorised bodies, as being a dominant operator in the market. The National Agency imposes an obligation on the dominant operator to ensure inter-connection at any technically feasible point in the network.

Thus, the legislation of the Republic of Moldova including special legislation on telecommunications provides a basis for the further development of competition. It contains the necessary conditions for taking measures in order to limit monopolistic activities. And even in cases of companies holding dominant position in the market the necessary provisions are stipulated to curb the negative consequences of lack of competition.

However, there still exist problems of realisation of these legislative requirements. In particular, these problems are faced in mutual relations between large operators, especially in the case of relations with Moldtelecom (which is a dominant operator in the market of telecommunications in Moldova) (see box 2).

Consumer Protection

The Consumer Protection Law No. 105-XV has been adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, on March 13, 2003. This Law took effect as of October 27, 2003. It includes provisions on:

- Definitions of consumer, producer, seller, service-provider, service, product, quality, abusive commercial practice, counterfeit product, damage, etc.
- Protection of consumer's safety, health and security by imposing specific requirements to the producers and sellers.
- Protection of consumer's economic interests via binding contract clauses, guarantee terms, etc. In particular, for the products, which do not indicate the expiry, the guarantee period shall be of 2 years.
- Informing consumers on the products produced, and
- Sanctions to be applied for the failure to comply with the law.

In comparison with the old Consumer Protection Law adopted in 1993, consumer rights are more clearly defined than in the current law, and the new Law is less tolerant of non-compliance and provides for penalties exceeding 500 minimum wages (Art. 28) for economic agents violating the new provisions. The authority responsible for implementation of The Consumer Protection Law No. 105-XV is National Agency for Consumer Protection, under the Ministry of Economics.

Concluding Observations and Future Scenario

At the end, we would like to point out that in a relatively short period (2007-2012) of activity in the competition domain, the NAPC has achieved important results, such as:

1. NAPC was established as a permanent competition authority within public administration, having the status of legal person, activating independently from other public administration institutions.
2. Despite the lack of such specialty in the higher educational institutions, a team of experts was formed which enforces the law on competition protection, undertaking the best European practices from the similar domain.
3. The activity of preventing anti-competitive actions was insured by approving the draft legislative acts, Government decisions. Therefore, during its activity period, the competition authority endorsed 363 draft enactments.
4. It carried on the activity of repressing the anti-competitive actions, in parallel with prevention thereof, bringing the consumers benefit in the centre. Within the reporting period, they completed the investigation of 403 cases related to unveiling the anticompetitive agreements, solving cases on abuse of dominance, unfair competition and advertising, as well mergers operations.
5. It contributed to the development of legal practice in the competition domain. We point out that the share of

the cases won compared to the lost ones, increased from 33percent in 2008, to 80-86 percent in the following years. On average, for the reporting period, the share of the cases won by the NAPC was 64 percent out of the total amount of the cases whose examination in the administrative contentious was completed.

6. Out of the total amount of the NAPC's decisions during its activity, till the end of 2011, the economic agents appealed in the court only about 8 percent, the rest of 92 percent not being appealed, fact which proves the validity and legitimacy of the NAPC's decisions (about 8 percent).
7. It was actively involved in the enhancement of the competition culture of the Republic of Moldova through the understanding of the importance of observing the competition legislation by the whole society and the business community. In this respect we point out that the number of appearances in the mass-media was about 800 times (within TV and radio programmes, news, briefings and articles in the written media and national web sites). The importance of knowing the competition and state aid rules makes the intensification of this activity for the future necessary, fact which shall lead to a better functioning of market mechanisms within a regular competition environment with direct effects on the final consumer.
8. The elaboration of a new draft law on conceptual amendment of the national competition framework – the new Competition Law – was initiated (December 2010) and finalised (August 2011). The NAPC prepared a draft law on state aid.

In view of promoting the draft laws, there were organised and carried out 10 public consultancies, both with the participation of the public authorities' representatives, and civil society and business environment representatives.

Finally, we would like to underline the fact that both draft laws, Competition Law and State Aid Law, were subject before their enactment to legal expertise and endorsement and in view of corruptibility.

The following strategic objectives which the Competition Council committed to achieve may be enumerated:

- ensuring the transparency of the competition authority activity;
- promotion of the competition culture for the business environment and consumers;
- enhancing the institutional capacity of the competition authority;
- improvement of the counteracting activity (prevention, suppression and sanctioning) for the severe anti-competitive actions, namely in the important sectors for the national economy and consumers;
- enhancement of the state control over the mergers operations; and
- creation and implementation of an efficient system of notification and reporting of the granted state aid.

† **Professor Viorica Cârare** was born on July 30, 1966. She is an economist, University Professor, holds a PhD in Economic Sciences and is the President of the Competition Council of Moldova.

She has continuously been the Head of the Competition Authority of Moldova, since its foundation (2007). Previously, she was the Director General of the National Institute of Economy, Finance and Statistics.

From 1995 until 2006 she was the head of the chair of International Economic Relations at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova. Professor Viorica Cârare has over 91 publications. She has been supervising PhD students from 1997.