

Annual Activity Report

2024

spune adevarul
zdg
ZIARUL de GARDA



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Audience and Readers

Who are they, where do they come from,
why do they read us?

In 2024, ZdG maintained several steady elements:

- it remained the largest investigative journalism group in the Republic of Moldova,
- it continued to be the number one newspaper with the highest number of subscribers,
- was the only investigative project featured in the Top 10 most-visited websites in the country, and
- it seems that we are also the most awarded newsroom in Moldova.



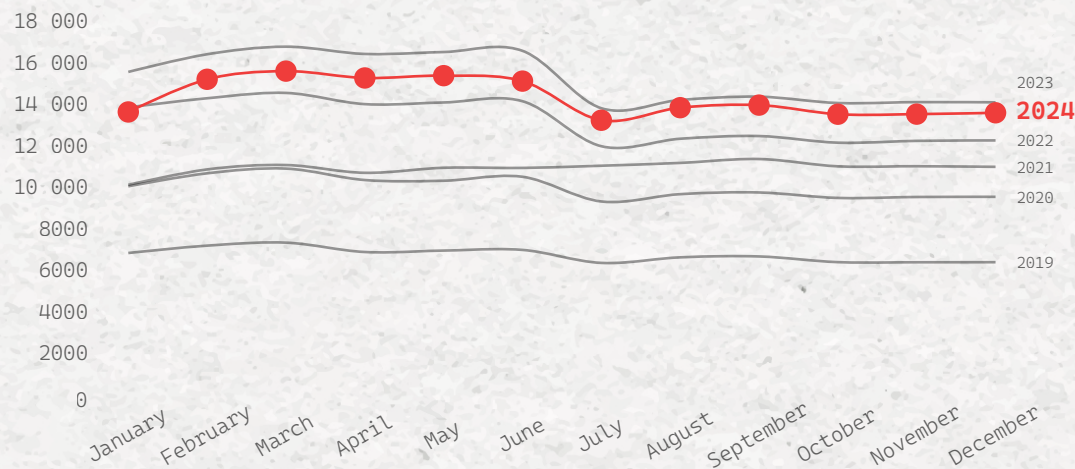
**Alina Radu, ZdG manager
and co-founder**

However, no success comes without effort, and nothing was handed to us for free. Despite being the most subscribed newspaper, this was the first time in the past decade that the print edition's circulation decreased.

This was **due to the dramatic increase in postal distribution fees—over 340%** — while most ZdG subscribers are retirees, for whom we did not dare to raise prices to cover costs and make a profit.

At the beginning of 2024, nearly **14,000 entities** subscribed to our newspaper, including families, public institutions, and private organizations.

[More details can be found here](#)





ZdG's website has consistently ranked among the **Top 10 most-visited websites in Moldova**, the Top 5 most-followed independent media sites, and the most-visited investigative journalism website.

Overall, zdg.md recorded 16.4 million page views. **For the first time, most readers accessed our website directly, without relying on social media referrals.** The majority of our audience comes from Moldova, Romania, Germany, Italy, and the UK.

In recent years, the number of views on the [Russian-language version of ZdG](#) has significantly increased. In 2022, it had 148,213 views, while in 2024, the number of views reached 1.4 million. This growth is due not only to Ukrainian readers seeking reliable information but also to the increasing interest from residents of Transnistria and Gagauzia.

Active users
5 mln.

New users
4,7 mln.

Average interaction duration
2 min. 04 sec.

ZdG provides real-time news updates in Romanian and Russian, covering corruption, justice, human rights, elections, transparency, integrity, and the Russian war in Ukraine.

www.zdg.md

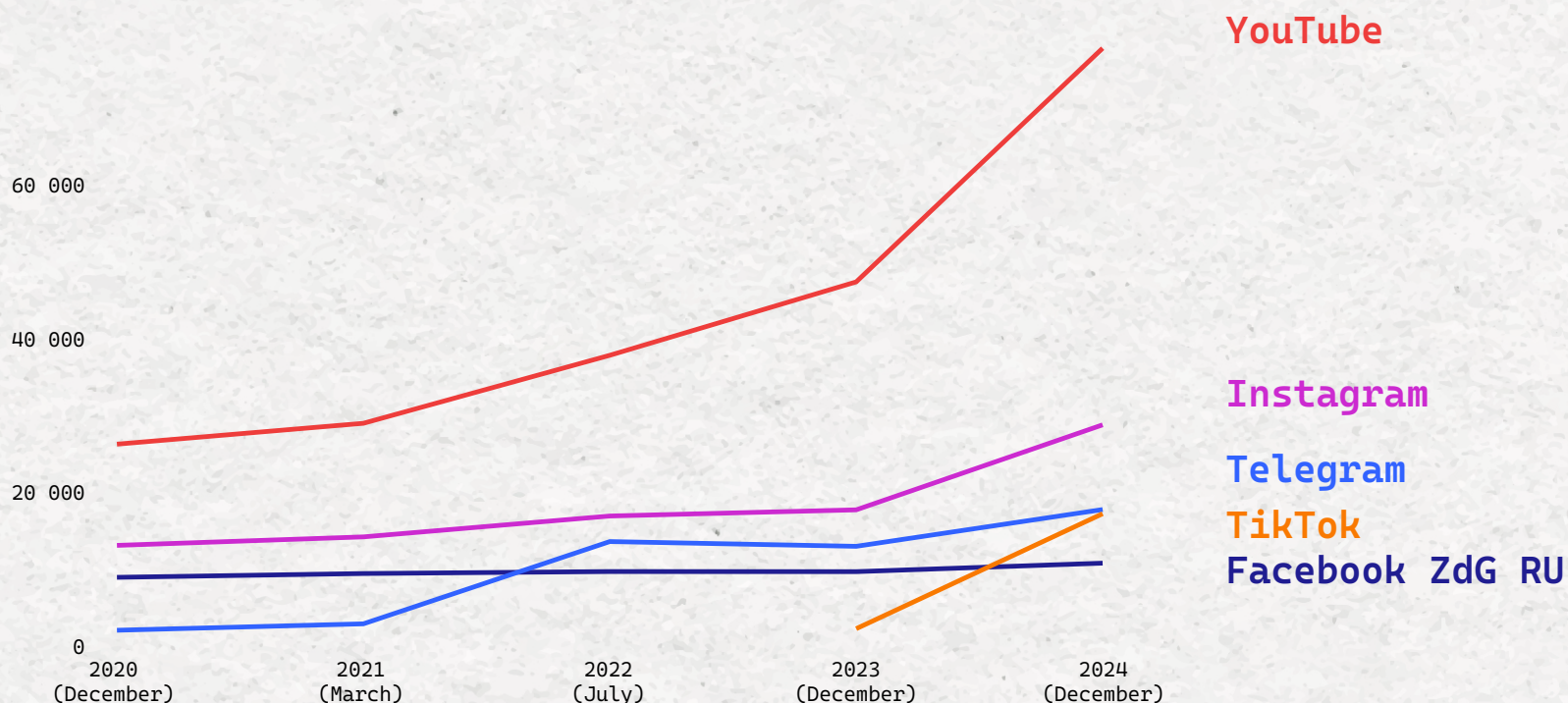




On social media, ZdG's successes were just as present, even though it was not easy.

The best growth was recorded on the **YouTube channel**, followed by **Instagram** and **TikTok**.

On **Facebook**, it was nearly impossible to decipher the platform's algorithms, agenda, or objectives. Additionally, our pages were repeatedly blocked or temporarily removed from the general feed.





In 2024, ZdG's YouTube channel recorded **6.4 million views**, a 35% increase compared to 2023.



Anatolie Eșanu,
video department
coordinator

Through our investigations, reports, interviews, and analyses, ZdG exposed referendum-rigging schemes, election fraud, "volunteers" hired for election campaigns, and provided weekly news summaries.



02 Journalism and Content

In 2024, over **9,500 texts** were published on `zdg.md` – approximately 28 pieces per day

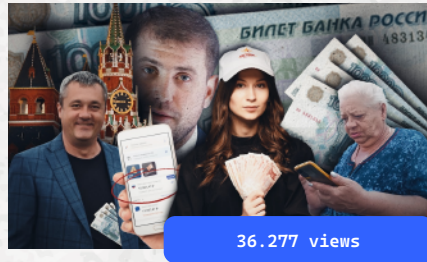
These included news on ZdG's key topics (corruption cases, monitoring important court trials, reforms—including judicial reform, institutional activities, elections, the referendum, transparency, integrity, and the war), as well as **investigations, reports, editorials, opinions, vox populi, life stories, and letters from readers.**

The most-read investigations and reports of 2024 focused on election fraud and the court cases of Eugenia Guțul. However, the most-read investigative article was the one revealing details about the brother of Ana-Maria's murderer, accused of killing a 10-month-old child in 2010:

Top Investigations on www.zdg.md



The brother of Ana-Maria's murderer suspect accused of killing a 10-month-old child. The court convicted the child's mother. "I prayed many times for the truth to come out"



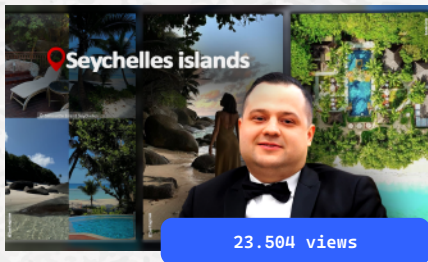
Serving Moscow. Three months among Șor's 'slaves.' A ZdG undercover investigation



Serving Moscow. Three months among Șor's 'slaves.' A ZdG undercover investigation



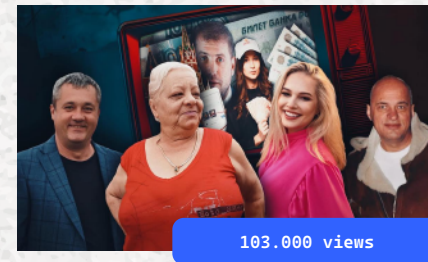
How the Referendum Was Rigged. Șor's Network Sides with Stoianoglo | In Moscow's Service



Judge's life: an exotic vacation on the Seychelles islands, kept from the public, and an apartment bought at a preferential price, later put up for sale at three times the price



Guțul absent, supporters present. Why the governor of Gagauzia did not attend the court hearing in the case of the illegal financing of the former Șor Party. The prosecutor requests a compulsory appearance



Serving Moscow. The 'ȘefiȘORii' Who are 'Tanti Raia,' 'Sașa,' 'Oleg,' or Svetlana Stanchevici—the main figures in the 'Serving Moscow' investigation



The 'volunteer' day laborers of Irina Vlah: 'If they catch us giving you money...'

The ZdG team paid close attention to the phenomenon of disinformation and manipulation, especially during the election period. The "Serving Moscow" investigations mentioned above exposed a Russian influence network based on manipulation and fake news.

ZdG also launched a series of video reports called **“Fake of the Month”**,

which aimed to thoroughly explain some of the most complex, debated, or unclear topics. The themes were selected based on public debates and reader suggestions.



The topic of war in the messages of politicians and vloggers: between falsehoods and reality.



'Annexation will happen, and Europe will applaud.' Șor's statements vs facts and explanations



'The cancellation of sovereignty, neutrality, the cession of lands.' The referendum and the pro-Russian falsehoods



The falsehood of August: 'Significant increase in energy tariffs, slavery, and the loss of alternatives for connecting to cheaper sources.'



The falsehoods in pre-referendum leaflets: LGBT, brain drain, suppression of freedom of expression



The falsehoods repeated by Stoianoglo during the electoral debate with Maia Sandu

Empowering Voters with Information

In 2024, ZdG covered closely the electoral campaign, the presidential elections, and the pro-European referendum.



During the summer of 2024, ZdG created a [special webpage for election observation](#), featuring candidate profiles, information on their wealth, interests, campaign actions, and controversies.

YouTube page featuring presidential candidates is [HERE](#).



ZdG continuously monitored signs of fraud during the campaign. The [ZdG investigations](#) into the fraud schemes of Șor's network and irregularities in Irina Vlah's campaign had a [significant impact](#).

ZdG was active on election day, maintaining a [Live Text](#) that covered all relevant information, while reporters went out on the field to gather data and opinions from various regions, including Transnistria and Gagauzia.

In total, we produced over **100 journalistic reports** covering voter turnout, the winners and losers of the election, and the broader electoral process.

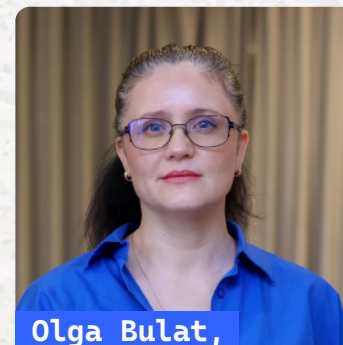
ZdG also **publicly supported the constitutional referendum**, encouraging readers to vote for Moldova's European path.

With the help of Moldovans from the diaspora and ZdG reporters traveling across the EU, we **debunked some of the most popular fake news** about the European Union.

The ZdG Youth Team launched **„EU pe înțelesul mEU” (EU in my understanding)**, a project aimed at educating those who want to learn about the European Union and Moldova's process of joining this political and economic union. Young journalists explained topics such as the role of the EU Parliament, the difference between EU councils, and the Schengen Area.

ZdG in Russian

In 2024, the Russian edition of ZdG consistently covered the war in Ukraine, the frequent drone incursions into Moldovan airspace, and the situation in Transnistria. Top 5 Most Impactful Articles in ZdG's Russian Edition are:



Olga Bulat,
Deputy Editor-in-Chief



Сепаратистский приднестровский регион: тесные отношения с Россией, но с экспортом в Евросоюз



ДВА ГОДА ВОЙНЫ. «Война еще не закончилась, и неизвестно, как долго она будет продолжаться». РЕПОРТАЖ из молдавского села, в котором упала первая российская ракета



«Послы Евразии» на «Территории детства». Как десятки детей из Молдовы попали в лагерь «перевоспитания» для украинских детей по программе, финансируемой «Евразией» Илана Шора



На службе у Москвы. Три месяца среди «рабов» Шора. Расследование ZdG под прикрытием



«Меня спасла Молдова, а те, кто пришел меня „спасать“, хотели меня уничтожить». 1000 дней российской войны в Украине – глазами ZdG

ZdG investigated how children from Moldova attended a Russian summer camp funded by the "Eurasia" organization, linked to fugitive oligarch Ilan Șor, and examined export myths in Transnistria with real data.

ZdG produced Russian-language content for its website and social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok.

Tradition and Innovation

In 2024, we continued our traditional columns on investigations, reports, and podcasts, but we also launched new ones guided by public interest and current realities.

Image of the Month

At the end of each month in 2024, we asked ChatGPT to generate an image based on the most discussed words, expressions, or events in the public space. It was a highly subjective experiment, but we wanted to explore what an artificial mind could create.



January

The celestial flakes and the mud of the "fools"



February

Fiery February, the citizenship of evil, and the snowdrops



March

The center of the universe is a perfectly made mămăliga



April

The Sahara's sand and the disinformation clouds from the Kremlin



May

May cherries and the mold of corruption



June

The opacity calendar of Chişinău City Hall



July

The delta of independent journalism



August

The candidates, many, but tainted



September

A wind with rubles was blowing towards the ballot boxes



October

The vote vacuum cleaner from the Kremlin



November

"Brain Rot" - expression of 2024



December

Santa Claus for journalists exists

zdgust

un proiect al
Ziarului de Gardă despre



sănătate



gastronomie



odihnă



muncă



mediu



stil



cultură

și alte sensuri ale vieții...



ZdGust

In 2024, we launched ZdGust.md, a project for people who want a break from investigative reports but still want to live well at home. We covered health, ecology, tourism, gastronomy, and culture, highlighting local businesses that contribute to the quality of life.

We spoke with doctors, nutritionists, ecologists, designers, local producers, employers, and experts in various fields. The project aimed to inform readers about living in balance with the environment and to showcase community-driven initiatives that promote the common good.



03 Impact

Authorities' Reaction • Content Picked Up from ZdG • What Citizens Said • Awards for ZdG Journalists • ZdG at the Museum

The year 2024 was significant for investigative journalism.

After several investigations and reports from ZdG, authorities took action, punishing some guilty parties while others escaped sanctions. Alongside official responses, we saw society mobilize to protest and fight disinformation. The "Serving Moscow" investigations were widely covered by media outlets in Moldova, Romania, and beyond. Internet users hailed it as "the victory of investigative journalism" in the presidential elections. ZdG's influence was also seen in the "A Decade of Corruption" exhibition at the museum.

Authorities' Response

Throughout 2024, authorities at various levels responded to ZdG's investigations and reports on crime, corruption, and abuse of office. Below is a brief timeline of actions taken by the authorities.

April 2024

The brother of the suspect in Ana-Maria's murder came under the authorities' attention after a ZdG investigation. He was accused of the murder of a 10-month-old child for which the child's mother had been convicted.

May 2024

The head of the Economic Analysis and Strategic Planning Service of the AIC, indicted in the airport concession case, no longer works in the institution "thanks to the press."

ZdG reporters were heard in court as witnesses in the case of the illegal financing of the former Șor Party following a 2022 investigation, "Protesters for Rent".

June 2024

The director of the "Joc" ensemble was dismissed after ZdG reported that several dancers had joined Șor in a dance performance in Russia alongside the convicted politician.

August 2024

The authorities launched an internal investigation after ZdG's investigation on "re-education" camps organized in Russia, though no sanctions followed.

September 2024

A large protest was organized in front of the Ministry of Justice after the publication of the article "The Anatomy of a Rape: The Voice of the Victim, the Villagers, and the Authorities."

October – November 2024

The protagonists of the "Serving Moscow" investigations, "Sașa" and "Oleg," were placed under preventive arrest for 20 days, and "Tanti Raia," after a few days of evasion, was taken into police custody and placed under house arrest for 30 days. In January 2025, they "hold defendant status and are under judicial control," according to the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office.

December 2024

The "Troll Couple" who disrupted Parliament by distributing false documents and using fake images deleted the stolen photos from Facebook after being exposed by ZdG.

The competition for the position of director of a gymnasium caught the attention of the Ministry of Education and Research following a ZdG article.

ZdG Content Takeovers by Other Media

Virtually every day, ZdG's news, reports, and investigations are picked up or quoted by other media institutions. However, in 2024, there was an unprecedented case of journalistic solidarity.

ZdG's "Serving Moscow" investigations were picked up and broadcasted on the most important TV stations in Moldova: Moldova1, TV8, Jurnal TV, Rlive TV, One TV, Star TV, Pro TV Chişinău, Vocea Basarabiei, Elita TV, as well as in Romania: TVR1 and TVR Info.

ZdG's "Serving Moscow" series was shared by several vloggers, influencers, and journalists from Moldova, Romania, and globally. Dozens of foreign journalists and experts visited or contacted the ZdG editorial office regarding these impactful stories (WDR, Sky News, New York Times, The Economist, BBC, El Espanol, Latvijas televīzija, Eesti Rahvusringhääling, etc.). With the help of the reader community, these investigations were translated into Russian and English.

Station	Date and Time
la TV	31 octombrie 2024, Ora 21:45
Jurnal TV	VINERI, 13 octombrie 2024, Ora 15:15
ONE	VINERI, 13 octombrie 2024, Ora 20:00
Moldova 1	VINERI, 13 octombrie 2024, Ora 17:00
STAR TV	VINERI, 13 octombrie 2024, Ora 22:00
TV8	SĂMBĂTĂ, 14 octombrie 2024, Ora 23:00
TVR1	Miercuri, 13 octombrie 2024, Ora 18:10
rlive	MIERCURI, 15 octombrie 2024, Ora 21:00
Elita TV	JOI, 31 octombrie 2024, Ora 21:30
Vocea Basarabiei	VINERI, 1 noiembrie, Ora 9:30
STAR TV	VINERI, 1 noiembrie 2024, 19:30
TVR1	JOI, 31 octombrie, Ora 14:00 și 22:00
Jurnal TV	VINERI, 1 noiembrie, Ora 14:00 și 22:00
TV8	VINERI, 1 noiembrie 2024, 12:50
Jurnal TV	JOI, 31 octombrie, Ora 21:30
Jurnal TV	VINERI, 1 noiembrie, Ora 12:30

The same investigations were picked up by dozens of media outlets in Romania: G4Media, Digi24, HotNews, News.ro, newsweek.ro, spotmedia.ro, Euronews, B1, Observator, Adevărul, Antena 3, and Libertatea.

- RO**

ÎN SLUJBA MOSCOVEI. Trei luni printre „robii” lui Șor | Investigație ZdG sub acoperire
Ziarul de Gardă • 464 K de vizionări • acum 4 luni
- RO**

Cum a fost fraudat referendumul. Rețeaua lui Șor, de partea lui Stoianoglo | ÎN SLUJBA MOSCOVEI (II)
Ziarul de Gardă • 319 K de vizionări • acum 3 luni
- RU**

НА СЛУЖБЕ У МОСКВЫ. Три месяца среди слуг шора. Расследование ZdG под прикрытием
Ziarul de Gardă • 19 K de vizionări • acum 4 luni
- EN**

How the Referendum Was Rigged. Șor's Network Sides with Stoianoglo | In Moscow's Service
Ziarul de Gardă • 11 K de vizionări • acum 3 luni

What do citizens say about us?

After the publication of the "In the Service of Moscow" investigation, internet users flooded social media with thousands of messages of gratitude and congratulations to the ZdG editorial office and the journalists who infiltrated Șor's network.

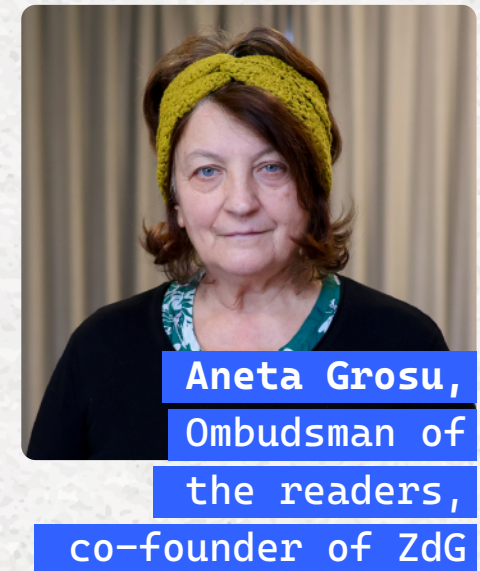
Furthermore, they declared investigative journalism the winner in the electoral elections, acknowledging its significant impact on voting results and people both in Moldova and abroad.

A challenging period was overcome thanks to independent press, which made the difference between transparency and corruption.

What the Residents of the Most Subscribed Village Said

For ZdG's anniversary, we made a report in the village with the most subscriptions. The locals shared how ZdG reached their households and how they envision Moldova in 20 years. Additionally, they all expressed the dream of joining the European Union.

ZdG maintains a constant relationship with its readers, publishing stories they have flagged, investigating cases, verifying data and appeals, asking for their opinions, and publishing letters and articles from them. Annually, we also ask for their opinion on ZdG's activity through surveys. Here are some of the words respondents from the 2024 survey associate with us:



Awards

In 2024, ZdG was one of the most awarded editorial offices in Moldova, gathering 22 awards for the best investigations, reports, courage, and impact.

Environmental Journalism Awards Gala

- Vasile Ursachi, First place, Written Press for "We Live in Fear: How Industrial Activity Affects Mateuți Village Health."
- Marina Gorbatovschi, Second place, for "Two Pairs of Hands and a Dog Fight for Lake Manta's Survival."
- Victoria Borodin, Third place, for "The Masters of Oil in Moldova: K1 Intermediaries Enter the Hydrocarbon Business."
- Special Award for "Most Active Editorial Team" - Ziarul de Gardă.

Independent Press Association (API)'s Internal Competitions for 2023

- Victor Moșneag - "Best Editor" category.
- Olga Bulat - "Best Reporter – Commentary" category.
- Natalia Zaharescu - "Best Investigative Journalist."
- Vasile Ursachi - "Best Reporter – Reportage."
- Marina Gorbatovschi - "Best Reporter – Reportage" and "Best Photojournalist."
- Milena Onisim - "Best Reporter – News."
- First place - Award for Contribution to Combating Disinformation.
- Award for Best Promotion Campaign.

The investigations "Serving Moscow" received 5 accolades

- Excellence Award from the Union of Professional Journalists of Romania (UZRP) at the UZRP 2024 Awards Gala.
 - First place at the national competition "Investigative Journalism of the Year 2024," Forumul Mass-Media 2024.
 - Honorable Mentions for "Courage and Perseverance in Uncovering Voter Bribery Schemes" at the "Covering Corruption in the Media" competition.
 - Măriuța Nistor and Natalia Zaharescu - "Journalists of the Year" 2024.
 - "Impact" Award for Excellence in Investigating Corruption, Media Guard Association.
-
- Victor Moșneag, Editor-in-Chief of ZdG, First place in the "Covering Corruption in the Media" competition.
 - Marina Gorbatovschi, "Journalists of the Year" 2024 (Reportage category), Center for Independent Journalism (CJI).
 - ZdG, "For Resilience and Professionalism" Award, Annual Press Club Gala.
 - Luminița Cauliuc and Natalia Zaharescu, Third place for the investigation "Platon's Plan. Revelations from a Volunteer," Forumul Mass-Media 2024.

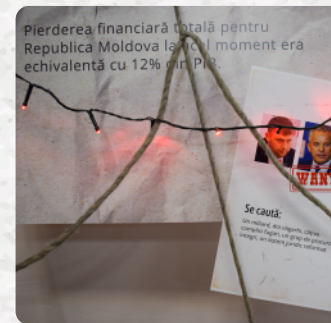


ZdG at the Museum

The Anti-Corruption exhibition has become a traditional event for Ziarul de Gardă, reaching its fourth edition in 2024. On December 10th, at the National History Museum of the Republic of Moldova, the exhibition marking 10 years since "The theft of the century" was inaugurated.

The exhibition title was "A Decade of Corruption – From the Billion-Dollar Theft to Vote Buying" and highlighted the system's challenges: how the case was not investigated, the delay in the investigation, the lack of definitive judicial decisions, the numerous ongoing cases, the flight of the main authors of the banking fraud from the country, and the corruption of judges. All of these (in)actions influenced the corruption of voters in the 2024 presidential elections.

All the exhibits



Natalia Popescu, a ZdG reader and visitor to the exhibition

"The journalists at Ziarul de Gardă have done an immense job over the years in the fight against corruption. The recent investigations, with so many impressive details and nuances ..."

04 Lessons

What did ZdG learn in 2024?

What experiences did ZdG share with others?

Internship Program at ZdG

**There is no growth
without lessons
learned or taught.**

The Ziarul de Gardă editorial team regularly participates in training and workshops by local organizations (API, CJI, Journalism School) and international institutions (BBC, OCCRP, Transparency International). ZdG journalists are often invited to national and international events to share expertise on investigations, fighting disinformation, and managing an independent newsroom. The team also offers internships to aspiring journalists for hands-on learning. We believe the best lessons come through experience, and we will continue to learn, work, and share.

What did ZdG learn in 2024?

In 2024, the ZdG editorial team participated in several essential trainings to improve the team's skills. Throughout the year, 14 team members attended dozens of trainings and events in the fields of journalism, security, and management, both in Moldova and internationally.

Two online training sessions organized by BBC covered topics such as **on-camera presentation, script writing and editing, lighting, video editing,** and content repurposing for social media platforms.

Because they are constantly developing and striving to keep up with the latest innovations, journalists also participated in training sessions to learn **how artificial intelligence is being used in newsrooms and this tool's latest trends.**

Additionally, some team members attended a cybersecurity course offered by the Swedish organization Qurrium, a course on **ethical dilemmas in reporting on children,** and a course on artificial intelligence in newsrooms.

Some team members also participated in an online workshop organized by BBC Media Action and the Center for Independent Journalism (CJI) on the **peculiarities of media coverage of elections.**

Other important trainings included a session on **resilience in the face of media challenges,** organized by API and OIP in Chişinău, and an expertise exchange on cross-border journalism in Tbilisi.

ZdG reporters attended various conferences on topics such as **journalism, anti-corruption, and combating disinformation** in Sarajevo, Strasbourg, Boston, Vilnius, Brussels, Gdansk, Prague, and Tallinn.

In 2024, ZdG hosted Cristian Drumcea from G4Media, Bucharest, for several days, during which he provided training and exchanged experiences on the newsroom's **economic development, advertising, commercial projects,** and building financial resilience.

What experiences has ZdG shared with others?

Throughout 2024, ZdG team members held training sessions for other media colleagues as well as for civil society members, participating in various meetings with public speeches on media, access to information, manipulation, communication, and the security of the informational space.

Alina Radu conducted a series of **training sessions on digital violence for reporters** from Chişinău, Comrat, Bălţi, and Cahul, organized by API. She also held a multi-day training on gender-based violence, organized by the Women's Law Center.

In December 2024, Olga Bulat delivered a lesson on **human rights gaps and the use of sensitive terminology**.

The Journalism School in Moldova organized a storytelling course, where Natalia Zaharescu and Măriuţa Nistor spoke to students about "In the Service of Moscow" and the life of an investigative journalist.

Măriuţa Nistor taught a lesson on disinformation during the election campaign at the Digital Media Camp event held at the Media Center for Youth in Chişinău. The session focused on combating disinformation in the context of elections.

At the Mass-Media Forum in Chişinău, ZdG was involved in sessions on reporter safety and security, access to information, and investigative journalism.

Alina Radu also led a workshop on media relations for communication officers at the National Penitentiary Administration and held a meeting with a Russian-speaking audience in Ceadâr-Lunga. Victor Moşneag met with readers from various towns in the Făleşti and Cahul districts, and at the end of the year, he presented the benefits of effective communication between the press and state institutions to communicators from government subordinates. In April, Victor participated in Investigative Talks, where he answered the question: "What if investigative journalism hadn't existed in Moldova?"

ZdG also hosted reporters from Kyrgyzstan, who visited the newsroom to learn about investigative journalism, resilience, development, and the sustainability of independent journalism.

Throughout the year, ZdG welcomed various groups who came to get to know the newsroom and learn from our experiences, including groups of journalism students from universities in Moldova.

The Internship Program at ZdG

In 2024, Ziarul de Gardă launched an internship program, offering interested individuals the opportunity to learn from the newsroom's journalists the most important secrets of the profession and the chance to work alongside them in a friendly and dynamic environment in constant growth.

In 2024, the paid internship program was supported by Internews Europe and benefited Gabriela Munteanu, Svetlana Ursachi, Andrea Vremiș, and Alexandra Dimitriu. Iana Cabacenco completed a two-month internship without a scholarship, while Alina Vlas came to ZdG with a scholarship from the Thomson Foundation. All of these individuals documented articles and published stories in ZdG, and Alexandra, Gabriela, and Alina were hired after completing their internships!

Details about the internship program

ZdG organizes a yearly training for the entire team on digital security, training reporters on the risks and dangers that can arise from using electronic equipment, browsing the internet, and using social media networks.

Each employee receives training on the safety of using their own equipment as well as editorial equipment, including training on the necessary actions in case of a digital attack on any ZdG platform or personal account.

At the end of December, the ZdG team gathered for the traditional year-end workshop, where we spent the sessions analyzing our annual activity, with conclusions on investigations, reports, impact, digital platforms, security, team status, ethical norms, files, challenges, and opportunities we faced.

Additionally, the ZdG team participated in the preparation of the ZdG work plan for 2025, including topics the team wants to work on, platforms where we would like to develop content, partnerships we seek, and other professional goals. You can learn more about our plans for next year in Chapter 8.



Gabriela Munteanu
Reporter

I first came to ZdG in the summer of 2024, initially for just one week – the duration of the university internship. Later, I stayed for the paid internship program for 3 months, which ended with my hiring at the best newsroom in the country. Why ZdG? Because the values promoted here align with my personal values. Plus, where better to improve than by learning from the best?

05 The life of ZdG

Over 30 people work at the ZdG editorial office, creating and developing everything that is ZdG.

We have reporters, cameramen, editors, proofreaders, social media managers, translators, Russian-language reporters, layout designers, public relations officers, digital security specialists, legal officers, fundraisers, financial managers, content managers, an ombudsman for readers' rights, and columnists.

The editorial team consists of people aged between 20 and 75, born in Chişinău, Călăraşi, Drochia, Reni (Ukraine), Hânceşti, Făleşti, Orhei, Cantemir, Nisporeni, Anenii Noi, Rîbniţa, Căuşeni, Cimişlia.

Most of the editorial members are young university graduates, who studied in Chişinău, Bălţi, Iaşi, Braşov, and Budapest. Currently, ZdG has 4 moms on maternity leave, and in total, the editorial office includes 13 parents with children and 3 proud grandparents.

We consider that the editorial office is more than just a workplace for the team members; it's a place for communication and friendship, learning and professional growth, a place where we work under pressure and get tired, but we try to enjoy ourselves despite all the difficulties.

ZdG has also created a **wellbeing program** to help reporters feel good within the team, stay motivated, inspired, and rewarded for their efforts. Almost all wellbeing measures (with a few exceptions) are provided from advertising revenues or services, not from grants.



Monthly Actions

- **Meal vouchers** – provided to employees with full-time work contracts as additional support
- **Monthly lunches at the editorial office** (the first Thursday of each month) as a measure of cohesion and communication
- **Monthly performance awards**, based on criteria established by the editorial board, to encourage tenacity, talent, and courage
- Occasionally, **tickets for theater, concerts, festivals, books** – based on existing partnerships
- Coffee, tea, and sometimes cookies from the house, plus **plenty of praise from readers**

Annual Actions

- **Birthday awards**, given equally to each employee to start a new year of life optimistically.
- On March 8th, all employees receive a **cultural voucher**, both women and men, to appreciate and promote equality

- During the **Easter holidays**, each employee receives an award to ensure a holiday meal with family

- On **ZdG's anniversary**, each employee receives an award for dedication to journalism, and employees with 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 years of service receive a special bonus for their devotion and professionalism

- **Family Days**: each employee is entitled to 3 extra days off their annual leave for any occasion or necessity: Mother's Day, village festivals, Valentine's Day, grandchild baptisms, or simply a solo getaway for relaxation

- **Notoriety Awards**: at the end of each year, 1-2 notoriety awards are given to employees who contributed the most to the development of journalism, the spread of ZdG's good name, and the expansion of both their own and the editorial office's horizons

- **End-of-year teambuilding** with a festive dinner and Christmas gifts, to celebrate the holidays with goodwill and comfort

- **Teambuilding on ZdG's anniversary**. In 2024, the ZdG team traveled together to the Danube Delta

20th Anniversary of Ziarul de Gardă in the Danube Delta

The ZdG team celebrated the [second decade since](#) the editorial office's founding by navigating the peaceful waters of the Danube Delta.

During the three days spent in the Delta, ZdG explored lakes, channels, and fishing villages, admired sunsets, visited museums, and celebrated independent journalism.

The most talented sang and composed poetry, while the bravest drank water from the Delta and ate thistles picked by the boatman. The local Lipovan residents' cherry liquor and "pirojociki" (pastries) were appreciated by everyone, and no one left without tasting the fish soup and being bitten by the infamous Delta mosquitoes.



06 Threats and Challenges

Throughout the year, we faced challenges such as access to public interest information, intimidation, and attacks on journalists.

The transparent coverage of the presidential campaign also brought with it a smear campaign against journalists, and content theft was a constant issue throughout the year. It's worth mentioning that we began 2024 with several ongoing legal cases, and although some were resolved during the year, new ones were added.

Challenges and Legal Cases

Content Theft

Many news portals and media outlets in the Republic of Moldova **illegally republish articles from other editorial teams without consent and without proper source citation**, thereby benefiting from journalists' work without investing in content production.

We signed a **declaration together with other media institutions** [calling for respect for the Journalist's Ethical Code](#), and we asked the Press Council to look into the issue of content theft.



Access to Public Interest Information

For 23 days, [the authorities in the capital ignored ZdG's request](#), exceeding the legal 10-day deadline for a response.

Despite repeated requests sent by ZdG to the Chișinău City Hall, [the responses received did not provide exact figures on the allocated funds and how they were spent.](#)



Intimidation, Attacks, and Manipulation

- Intimidation of ZdG reporter Felicia Ganev by the spokesperson of the Chişinău City Hall: Natalia Ixari, who covered the journalist's microphone and avoided being filmed, even though she had previously recorded the entire interview to post it on social media.
- Judge Victor Sandu reacted to the article about his exotic vacation and the preferential sale of an apartment. In a Facebook post, he accused the editorial team of publishing "manipulative and defamatory content." You can see the clarifications ZdG made HERE.
- The smear campaign against ZdG's director, Alina Radu, during the electoral period: A network belonging to the Şor group was responsible for posting defamatory content on Facebook from obscure pages that attacked both the journalist and her daughter.

DECLARAȚIE cu privire la campania de denigrare la care am fost supusă în perioada electorală. Alina Radu, directoarea ZdG

4 noiembrie 2024, 14:30

1206 viz.



Legal Cases Against ZdG

Throughout 2024, ZdG has been a defendant or an accessory intervener in nine legal proceedings at all levels of the court system. Among these, three lawsuits concerning the defense of honor, dignity, and professional reputation were received by the editorial office during the year.

- Luminița Mihalcean took legal action against the newsroom following the publication of the article titled "Corruption Accusations and Pressure on Employees at Gheorghe Paladi Municipal Hospital." She demanded a retraction of the information, a public apology, compensation for moral damages amounting to 100,000 lei, and coverage of legal expenses.
- Members of Parliament Adrian Albu and Bogdat Țîrdea also sued the newsroom after the publication of the article "Socialist Adrian Albu's Conversation with an FSB Agent Leaked Publicly. What Was the Russian Agent's Plan to 'Clean' Şor's Image?" The socialist MPs demand retractions and financial compensation.

The Fight for Transparency: ZdG Defends Its Right to Access Information in Court

After the Chişinău City Hall severely restricted our right to access information, we decided to **defend this right through legal authorities and judicial proceedings.**

We **requested information from the Chişinău City Hall** regarding municipal projects for stormwater infrastructure and the financial resources allocated for the arrangement and rehabilitation of sidewalks in the capital.

As the institution violated the legal provisions on access to public interest information, **we filed a lawsuit requesting the court to oblige the City Hall to provide the requested information** and to sanction the institution for breaching the law.



Court Ruling and Next Steps

On December 9, 2024, the Râșcani branch of the Chişinău Court partially upheld ZdG's claim, ruling that the City Hall's refusal to provide public interest information was unfounded. **The institution was ordered to supply the requested information and was fined twice, with each fine amounting to 1,000 lei, to be paid into the state budget.** The ruling is not final and has been challenged by the Chişinău City Hall.

Police Involvement and Challenging Decisions

Additionally, ZdG **reported the issue to the police twice**, requesting that responsible officials within the Chişinău City Hall be sanctioned for violating legal provisions on access to information. As these requests were not granted, we challenged the decisions of the investigating officers in court.

07 Money and Support

Investigative journalism is the most costly form of journalism because documenting these materials takes longer and requires the combined efforts of entire teams.



Aliona Cenușă,
financial manager

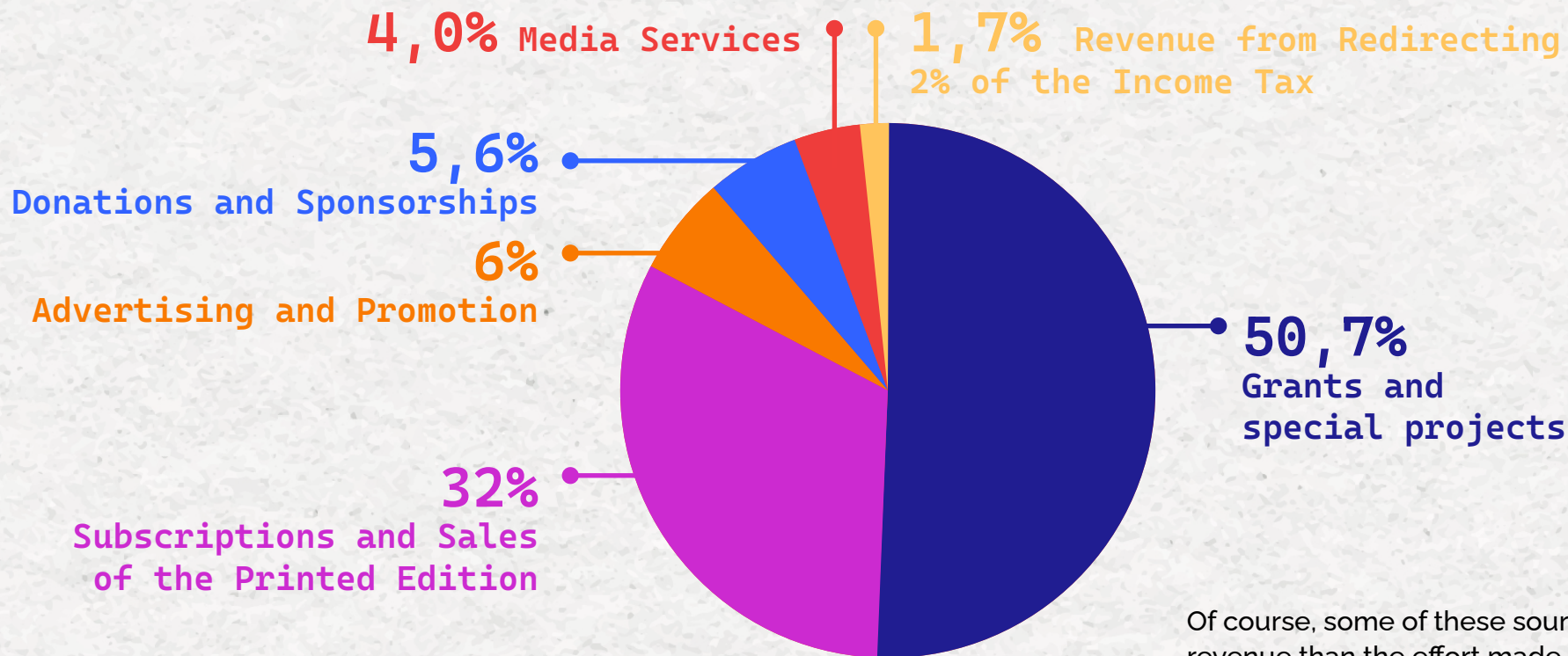
Sources of Income in 2024

Below is a list of the funding forms we've worked on in 2024:

Investigative journalism is the most costly form because it requires more time and team effort. ZdG's reports focus on challenging issues like human rights violations, corruption, judicial reform, and the war in Ukraine, which don't attract commercial advertising. As a result, ZdG seeks diverse financial sources to cover costs and sustain its team.

- Grants, special projects supported by donors and development partners
- Subscriptions and sales of the printed edition of ZdG
- Advertising and promotion offered to companies and organizations through advertorials and banners, including through Admixer
- One-time donations via zdg.one or direct bank transfers
- Donations of pending subscriptions or subscriptions for loved ones
- Recurring donations through PayPal, Patreon
- Merchandising - selling ZdG-branded items
- Media services: creating reports and articles based on collaborations with other organizations, mainly other NGOs, organizing press conferences
- YouTube monetization and donations received directly through this platform
- Revenues from redirecting 2% of income tax
- Sponsorships and corporate support
- Training and mentoring services provided by ZdG to groups and institutions

The Share of Revenue Sources for ZdG in 2024



Of course, some of these sources bring less revenue than the effort made, but we do not give up on diversifying income sources so that we are not totally vulnerable when some donors withdraw, grants end, or advertising projects contradict ethical norms and deontological principles of ZdG.

Partnerships, Advertising, and Partners

At Ziarul de Gardă, we believe that impactful journalism is also made through partnerships, through which we manage to bring essential human stories to our audience and highlight activities that deserve to be known.

In 2024, we had the pleasure of collaborating with Help Age Moldova, the Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT", the Technical University of Moldova (UTM), the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Nicolae Testemițanu" (USMF), the Contact Center in Cahul, the Association of Independent Press (API), GAL "Trei Coline", the Center for Analysis and Prevention of Corruption (CAPC), A.O. "Women for Women", the Moldo-Swiss Center for Cooperation SKAT through the "Mă Implic" project, the Regina Pacis Foundation, Amnesty International Moldova, and Women of Moldova.

ZdG also places advertising, but we must be mindful of ethical norms and consumer responsibility.

Thus, ZdG does not accept advertising for tobacco and smoking products, hard liquor (we sometimes accept advertising for local wines and wineries), products imported from the Russian Federation or from regions where human rights are grossly violated. During the recent electoral campaign, **ZdG refrained from electoral advertising** to avoid financial flows from corrupt, obscure politicians with criminal records and opaque financing who were admitted to the candidate list.

In the advertising field, we appreciate the partnerships with companies and marketing agencies that choose to promote their messages through Ziarul de Gardă on all our platforms.

Through these collaborations, we not only support independent journalism but also provide our readers with access to relevant information about initiatives, services, and products of interest.

Among the agencies we work with are Independent Media House (IMH), Parsec, Maximize, Onica Media, Adcenter, Qubo Communications, Media Show Group, BDR Associates, First Media, RS Communications S.R.L.

Alina Coroi, Media Director of IMH, explains:

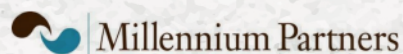
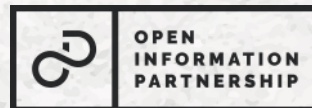
"Our collaboration with Ziarul de Gardă is particularly valuable. Many of our clients, after testing promotion on the zdg.md platform through the placement of commercial articles and banners, decided to sign annual contracts, impressed by the visibility and impact achieved.

The quality of content published on the zdg.md platform attracts an extremely high-quality audience who values exclusive materials, solid investigations, and trustworthy journalism, which makes promoting on this site effective and leads to remarkable results for commercial clients."

ZdG's main advertising clients, who continue to support us in 2025, include: Orange Moldova, Moldcell, Farmacia Familiei, MAIB, Victoriabank, Eximbank, ProCredit Bank, Kaufland, Banca de Alimente, Moldova Projects, Coaliția Viața fără violență, Metro, Moldtelecom, Fagura, Linella, Yep Moldova, Lenovo, Bancamea, API, USMF, Gender Doc, GAL "Trei Coline", Solar Prim, Poșta Română, Sicro Travel, Microinvest, Castel Mimi, Zorile, Nova Poshta, OOK Group, Caparol, Nova Lines, OMNIS, Endolife, Mantis (rabota.md), PlastRegal, Romanescu&Co, RocketSEO SRL, Multimedica, Orhei Vit, Transparency International Moldova, Civitta, Cartier, Concordia, Ecovisio, Primăria Sirești, Promofarm.

We encourage our readers to discover and explore the stories, projects, and initiatives of our partners. Whether it is about social responsibility actions, useful services, or innovative projects, these collaborations contribute to the sustainability of independent journalism!

Grant Donors for 2024



zdg.one Donations

The people who donated in 2024 for ZdG have also written messages of appreciation. Here are just some of them:

- *Respect and gratitude for the courage and work of the team!*
- *Thank you from the heart for all the effort put in. Today, Moldova is a democratic and free country, including thanks to your team's massive effort!*
- *Greetings to the extraordinary team at Ziarul de Gardă! Thank you for the work and dedication with which you inform the public and fight for truth. I admire your courage and professionalism, and I am happy to contribute to supporting your activities. Continue being a source of inspiration and an example in the media!*
- *Thank you for the ongoing effort in investigations and information.*
- *Thank you for the work of the whole ZdG team, you're doing an extraordinary job.*
- *Thank you for your dedication, wisdom, and the example you set in progressing our society through your forms of journalism.*
- *This is the first time I've been so impressed by a journalistic investigation from Moldova.*
- *You are my source of information since I left abroad; thank you for everything you do!*
- *You do excellent journalism, bravo and good luck ahead!*

Those who support and encourage us every day, month after month, through financial contributions and appreciation messages are not only hardworking and involved people from the Republic of Moldova but also from around the world. We are grateful to our readers and supporters from Romania, Italy, the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, Norway, Sweden, Canada, and Belgium.

Support us here

Throughout 2024, Ziarul de Gardă has been a media partner for events and campaigns that promote culture, solidarity, and innovation: the Moldox Festival, Romanian Film Days, the CARBON Film in the Guinness World Records, the "National Kindness Week" Campaign, 4th edition, campaigns implemented by Moldova Project.

Thank you to every reader, donor, and partner who contributes to the existence of ZdG!

08 Our Plans for 2025

Journalism in 2025: Crises, Elections, and Much Resistance



Victor Moșneag,
Editor-in-Chief

In 2025, we continue to investigate and inform readers about the most important topics in the public space. In 2025, Ziarul de Gardă aims to reflect in detail the parliamentary elections scheduled for this fall and to fact-check the candidates who will appear on the electoral lists. We will also publish information about the most important political formations aiming to enter the future legislature.

In 2025, we aim to do everything possible to reach a diverse audience. We want to reach people influenced by Russian propaganda in order to provide them with correct and verified information. We want to get to know them better, without judging or criticizing them, but to understand them.

We have already created a TikTok account in Russian, while we will continue to develop this type of content on the Romanian language account as well. We have also created a YouTube channel in Russian.

We will do more explanatory journalism, both in video and text format, in both Romanian and Russian.

We will continue to trace the roots of disinformation and its promoters while debunking falsehoods in the public space. We will visit the localities where we have the most subscribers, where we will write about the people there, as well as about the problems they face. We will also go to areas where disinformation is "at home" to talk to people and bring their fears into the public space.

In 2025, we will monitor even more high-profile cases involving former or current high-ranking officials accused of corruption. We will continue to investigate recent corruption cases where there are suspicions of mismanagement of public funds, allegations of influence peddling, or favoritism. We will do all of this, and much more, while on www.zdg.md we will publish the latest and most important news of the day, with the necessary explanations and context to make it as easy to understand as possible.

09 Takeaway

How You Can Support Public Interest Journalism

1

If you've read ZdG's investigations, news, and reports for free so far, you can make donation:

zdg.one/donatii

patreon.com/zdg

2

If you pay taxes, choose to transfer 2% of your taxes to us (Fiscal Code:)

1010620003744

3

If you have access to an external community, share our story – our activity reports and regulations are here:

zdg.md/despre

4

If you represent a business, institution, or project and need promotion, check out our offer here:

zdg.one/publicitate

5

Don't forget to gift subscriptions to the printed edition and PDF to people who need to read:

zdg.one/abonare

6

If you're a reporter and love investigative journalism, join us. Our hiring guidelines are here:

zdg.md/despre/#vino