



# 2014

## ANNUAL REPORT

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+ 373 687 77 590   [twitter.com/risemoldova](https://twitter.com/risemoldova)  
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[www.rise.md](http://www.rise.md)   [risemoldova](https://www.risemoldova.com)



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## About RISE Moldova

(The Association of Investigative Reporters and Editorial Security) is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization consisting of investigative journalists, programmers and activists from Moldova and Romania. RISE investigates on such issues as corruption, conflict of interests, money laundering, offshore connections, and cross border organised crime schemes and networks.

**RISE Moldova** was registered at Ministry of Justice of Moldova at March 17, 2014 as a NGO  
(Registration number: 1014620001999).

## RISE Moldova



## Mission

Our mission is developing and promoting professional investigative journalism.



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**RISE Moldova** members are experienced investigative journalists and researchers. Some are freelancers; others are also affiliated with local or international media outlets.



### IURIE SANDUTA

*He is President of RISE He worked and member of Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)*

**Specialization:** Cross border investigations

### NICOLAE CUSCHEVICI

*Reporter RISE Moldova*

**Specialization:** Investigative journalism and photo reporting

### VLADIMIR THORIC

*Editor in chief at Russian-language newspaper „Panorama”, member of OCCRP*

**Specialization:** Investigation on frauds from politics and economics

### OLGA CEAGLEI

*Reporter Centre of Investigative Journalism*

**Specialization:** Investigation on corruption and social subjects

### ION PREASCA

*Editor in chief, Mold-Street*

**Specialization:** Investigation on economic issues

### MIHAI MUNTEANU

*Reporter-at-large at Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)*

**Specialization:** Investigations on organized crime subjects

### DUMITRU STOIANOV

*Freelance reporter*

**Specialization:** Investigations on sports

### ALINA TURCANU

*Editor at Radio Free Europe Moldova*

**Specialization:** Investigative journalism and photo reporting



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# Moldova and regional organized crime networks

Moldova's territory is frequently used by international organized crime groups that specialize in money laundering (from Eastern and Western Europe) drug trafficking and arms trafficking. This is due to the geographical position of the Republic of Moldova on the border of the European Union (UE) and Community of Independent States (CIS).

At the same time, Moldova remains attractive for international criminal organizations because of the existence on its territory Transnistria, a separatist region which does not have secure, well-delimited border. Several crime organizations are active on the territory of Moldova. They are led by “thieves in law”, among who we can count: “Makena,” “Bulgaru,” Ivan Gușan aka “Patron,” Ion Druță aka “Pisateli,” in addition to other criminal authorities directly connected to the Russian mafia. According to police, “thieves in law” from Georgia, Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania frequently meet in the Republic of Moldova to share and manage regional crime information.





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Between 2013 and 2014 we cooperated with journalists from United Kingdom, Romania and Russia to uncover complex illegal business and criminal organization which ordered some assassinations, including shooting of a former Moldovan banker German Gorbuntsov which occurred in London in early 2014.

Our reporters revealed an international heroin smuggling network from Tajikistan, through Russia and into the Republic of Moldova – story which had considerable impact.

In 2014 RISE Moldova along with OCCRP and Novaya Gazeta developed an investigation that involves a scheme in which \$20 bln. originating in Russia, was laundered in Moldova via the judiciary and banking system. We investigated who are the beneficiaries of the laundered money and found links to Vladimir Putin's cousin; FSB officers; offshore companies; banks from Latvia, Russia and Moldova; proxy agents; politicians; and several criminal authorities.

## Moldova and regional organized crime networks





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## „Russian Laundromat”: Moscow–Riga via Chisinau\*

...the biggest money laundering scheme in Eastern Europe involving Vladimir Putin's cousin, FSB officers, Russian companies, offshore companies, Russian, Latvian and Moldovan banks, Moldovan judges, proxy agents and important figures from criminal world. >>>

f Impact 508

### Conected articles:

- >> RISE Moldova reporter insulted by proxy agent
- >> Platon's relations with Moldindconbank
- >> "Phantom" accounts at Moldindconbank held by Russian banker
- >> Kempinski negotiating oil businesses with Aleksandr Grigoriev
- >> Trasta Komerbanka - EU viza for "dirty" money coming from Rusia

## Investigations



\* 🇷🇺 named **The best investigation** of 2014 by Centre of Independent Journalism of Moldova  
 🏆 shortlisted for the 2014 European Press Prize award





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## Vladimir Plahotniuc, monitored abroad

... surprising Moldovan millionaire Vladimir Plahotniuc during his trip to Swiss town of Sciez along other Moldovan businessmen, TV presenters, and politicians. >>>

f Impact 7 692

## Investigations





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## Kingdom of His Wealthiness Metropolitan bishop Vladimir and transactions made during the Holly Week

...presents connections between Metropolitan bishop Vladimir, bishop of Ciuflea Monastery, proxy agent Oleg Popov, and president of Porsche Moldova club. >>>

 **2 282**

### Conected articles:

>> **PhD thesis in economics sustained by Metropolitan bishop Vladimir**







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## Houses and rental businesses of Moldovan priests

...some luxury houses held by priests are headquarters for a branch of Chinese giant ZTE Corporation, some private schools and kindergartens and residence of Italian ambassador in Republic of Moldova. >>>

f Impact 5 450

## Bishop's houses and lost business of a local bishop

... connections made between an Eparchy from Edineț and Briceni and controversial businessman. The story presents also houses of priests locate in north of Moldova. >>>

f Impact 2 490

## Investigations





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## Ministries with secret businesses

... Ministry of Construction Marcel Răducan used Moldproinvest company to hide his direct connection with commercial centre „Budapest”, some real estates, and also used this firm to found another two. Another heroes of the story are Ministry of Internal Affairs chief Dorin Recean and Ministry of Labour and Social Assistant Valentina Buliga. >>>



### Conected articles:

>> National Commission for Integrity reacts to RISE story: Six ministers under investigation

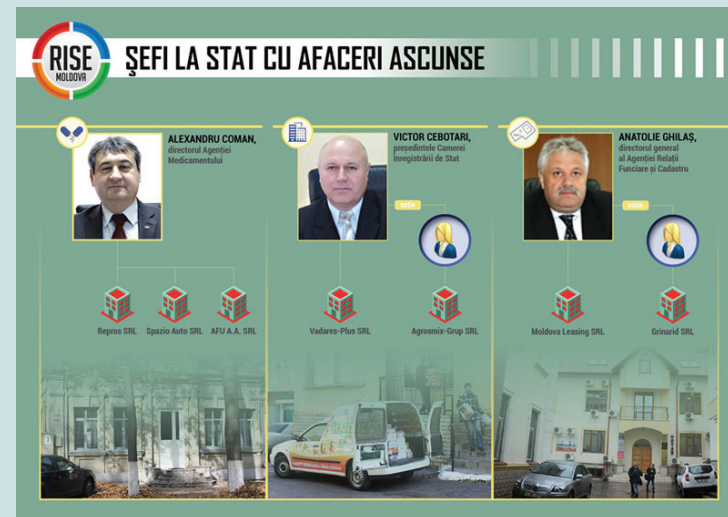


## Investigations

### State officials with business hidden in masonic lodge „Alianța”

...Drug Agency director hide his business in masonic lodge. At the same time some officials from „CADASTRU” haven't declared their companies that have a big income. >>>

Impact 2 721



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## Russian arms traffic in Ukraine with the help of criminal network from Moldova

... One of the most influential criminal network at the Western border of Ukraine sold arms to OCCRP reporters. Transactions took place at Chisinau, 180 km away of Ukrainian port from Odessa. Arms are coming from 14th Russian Army which is located in Transnistria. >>>

f Impact 2 047

YouTube 10.463

### Conected articles:

>> **Criminal head called „Pisateli” („Writer”), arrested as a result of RISE Moldova investigation**

## Investigations



(\*dates collected on March 2nd 2015)



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## Assassin in Law

... journalistic insight to the world of killers coming from ex-Soviet Union and operating around the Europe to execute orders that involves influential Russian bankers, businessmen connected to Kremlin, secret services, and Russian criminal authorities so-called „Thief in Law” (*Vor v Zakone*). >>>

f Impact 5 720

YouTube 157.780



## Investigations

(\*dates collected on March 2nd 2015)





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# RISE Moldova in media

## NATIONAL

The most references in 2014\* to RISE Moldova were made by following media outlets operating online:



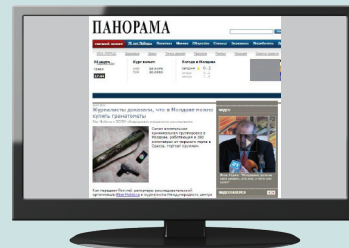
UNIMEDIA



EUROPA LIBERĂ



ADEVĂRUL



PANORAMA



OMEGA



GAGAUZINFO

\* according to Google Analytics



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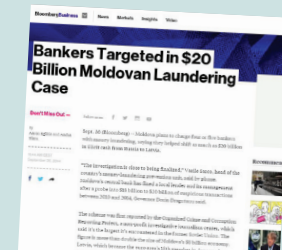
## Partners

## INTERNATIONAL

### Bloomberg.com

## Bankers Targeted in \$20 Billion Moldovan Laundering Case

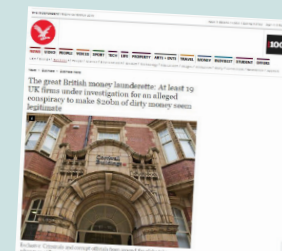
*Refers to „Russian Laundromat”: Moscow–Riga via Chisinau*



### Independent.co.uk

## The great British money launderette: At least 19 UK firms under investigation for an alleged conspiracy to make \$20bn of dirty money seem legitimate

*RISE Moldova helped The Independent journalists to investigate this story*



### EuroNews.com

## „Is Moldova's mafia selling weapons to Ukrainian separatists?"

*Refers to „Russian arms traffic in Ukraine with the help of criminal network from Moldova”*



### Eurasianet.org

## Moldova: Money-Laundering Case Puts Judiciary on the Spot

*Refers to „Russian Laundromat”: Moscow–Riga via Chisinau*



### Hotnews.ro

## „Mașina rusească de spălat bani în Republica Moldova. 20 de miliarde de dolari, albiți într-o operațiune din care face parte și vărul lui Vladimir Putin”

*Refers to „Russian Laundromat”: Moscow–Riga via Chisinau*



### Cotidianul.ro

## „Un văr al lui Putin, implicat într-o uriașă operațiune de spălare de bani”

*Refers to „Russian Laundromat”: Moscow–Riga via Chisinau*





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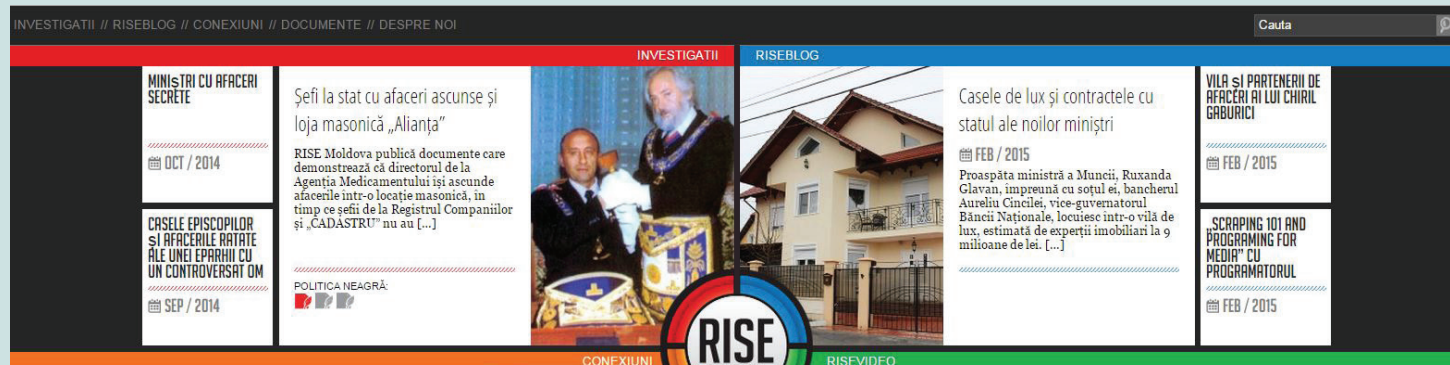
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TOP 10 articles  
by number of visualisations\*

- [PHOTOS] Vladimir Plahotniuc, monitored abroad - **22.407**
- Ministries with secret businesses - **13.887**
- Houses and rental businesses of Moldovan priests - **10.361**
- Russian Laundromat”: Moscow–Riga via Chişinău - **8.037**
- [Video] Assassin in Law - **5.547**
- Kingdom of His Wealthiness Metropolitan bishop Vladimir and transactions made during the Holly Week - **4.685**
- State officials with business hidden in masonic lodge „Alianța” - **3.141**
- Bishop's houses and lost business of a local bishop - **2.853**
- [Video] Russian arms traffic in Ukraine with the help of criminal network from Moldova - **2.142**
- Platon's relationship with Moldindconbank - **1.680**

TOP 5 articles  
by time spent on page\*

- Ministries with secret businesses - **00:09:54**
- [Video] Russian arms traffic in Ukraine with the help of criminal network from Moldova - **00:09:02**
- The Russian Laundromat: Moscow – Riga via Chişinău - **00:08:40**
- Connection / Ruslan Siloci - **00:06:09**
- State officials with business hidden in masonic lodge „Alianța” - **00:05:31**

\* according to Google Analytics

July, 1

52.666  
Total unique visits

December, 31



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# Activities planned for 2015

>>> Developing institutional capacity of organization;

>>> Regular publishing investigations made on public interest issues;

>>> Collaboration with investigative journalists from other countries;

>>> Affiliation to international organization of investigative journalism;

>>> Developing of RISE Moldova web page and creating Russian and English versions;

>>> Giving logistical assistance to journalists who investigate organized crime and corruption;

>>> Organizing trainings and workshops for journalists, activists and programmers;

>>> Creating national network of investigative journalists.





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## I. „Program on Independent Journalism”

**Financier:** Foundation Open Society Institute (London)

**Grant amount:** \$ 25 000

**Period of implementation:** November 2014 – October 2015

„Program on Independent Journalism” propose to develop and to strength institutional capacity of RISE Moldova by giving basic logistical assistance. Also project contributes to editorial independence of RISE Moldova as a media institutions in Moldova..

## II. „Rebooting Moldovan Journalism”\*

**Financier:** United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)

**Grant amount:** \$ 225 981

**Period of implementation:** December 2014 – April 2016

Project proposes to relaunch qualitative journalism in Moldova by rebooting values and techniques used by reporters and editors during their duties. It also aims to increase media credibility. Project's activities are multidimensional and practical activities are held by the principle „training by doing”. Target groups are journalists, editors, media owners, activists and programmers. These professionals will be encouraged to work together in order to produce attractive and inovative media content.

*\*RISE Moldova is a OCCRP sub-grantee within this project*



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RISE Moldova activates in the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a regional organization which gathers investigative journalism associations from Eastern Europe. Other partnerships include Global Investigative Journalism Network and RISE Project.



# Partners