

# Ethnologue: Languages of Moldova

## Twenty-sixth edition data

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## List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
<i>alt.</i>	alternate name for
<i>alt. dial.</i>	alternate dialect name for
AOV	Agent-Object-Verb
C	Consonant in canonical syllable patterns
CDE	Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
<i>Class</i>	Language classification
CPPDCE	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
DBS	Deaf Bible Society
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
DOOR	Deaf Opportunity Outreach
FCPNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1998)
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
IMB	International Mission Board
km	kilometer(s)
L1 / L2	first language / second (or other additional) language
<i>Lg Dev</i>	Language development
<i>Lg Use</i>	Language use
m	meter(s)
P	Patient in constituent word order
PARADISEC	Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources In Endangered Cultures
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
pl.	plural
S	Subject in constituent word order
sg.	singular
SIL	SIL International
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
V	Vowel in canonical syllable patterns

## How to Use This Digest

This *Ethnologue* country digest provides an extract of the information about the language situation in Moldova that is published in the 26th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), including some ways of presenting the information that are not available in the online version. The digest begins with a “Country Overview” (page 6) and “Statistical Summaries” (page 8) of languages and number of speakers by language size, by language status, and by language family.

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) provides detailed information on the 13 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Moldova. This includes languages that are indigenous to the country, languages that have developed well-established multigenerational speaker communities after immigrating in the past, and languages that have a significant presence in the country but are not established (that is, not being transmitted to the next generation within the country). A complete language entry has the following form and content:

**Primary language name** [ISO 639-3 code] (Alternate names). Autonym. *Users*: Country user population. Population stability comment. Population remarks. Monolingual population. Ethnic population. *Location*: Location. *Status*: EGIDS level. Special cases. Language function in country. *Class*: Linguistic classification. Macrolanguage membership. *Dialects*: Dialect names. Intelligibility and dialect relations. Lexical similarity. *Type*: Linguistic typology information. *Lg Use*: Remarks on use of the language. Domains of use. User age range. Language attitudes. Bilingualism remarks. Use as second language. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rates. Literacy remarks. Use in education. Publications and use in media. Revitalization efforts. Language development agencies. *DLS*: Digital support. *Writing*: Scripts used. *Other*: Non-indigenous. General remarks. Religion. *Worldwide*: Total population in all countries. Other countries where used.

See <http://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/#languagePages> for a full description of these information elements. If the autonym contains the “?” character, this indicates a complex non-Roman character that the PDF-creating software we are using is not able to render. We regret the inconvenience.

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 19) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 21) lists the languages by their level of development or endangerment as measured on EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). “Languages by District” (page 24) lists the top-level administrative subdivisions of Moldova and the languages located within each. “Languages by Family” (page 25) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 26) gives an alphabetical listing of all the three-letter codes from ISO 639-3 that are used in this digest to uniquely identify languages. “Language Name Index” (page 27) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 23 unique names are associated with the 13

languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography” (page 28). The published sources are cited using standard in-text citations enclosed in parentheses, consisting of the author’s or editor’s surname followed by the year of publication. Unpublished sources including personal communications and unpublished reports are also acknowledged when specific statements or facts are attributed to them. They are identified using in-text citations enclosed in parentheses in which the year of the communication is given first, followed by the source’s first initial and surname. In such a case, there is no corresponding entry in the bibliography.

This digest is designed for use in both digital and print formats. The cross-references are thus rendered as page numbers that are hyperlinks. When using the document in printed form, simply turn to the referenced page by number. When using it in digital form, click on the blue text to jump to the cross-referenced location.

If you believe any of the information about a language in this digest is in error or if you are able to supply missing information, please send your proposed change to the editor using one of the means given below. Provide as much information as possible about the source of your information. Full bibliographic details of published sources are especially helpful.

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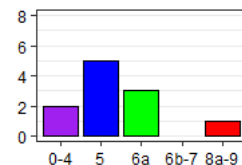
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## Country Overview

Name of country	Moldova
Other names	Republic of Moldova
Population	3,287,000 (2022 World Factbook)
Comments	No population results from Transnistria, which unilaterally declared independence from Moldova in 1990, recognized only by Russia and other breakaway territories.
Principal languages	Romanian, Russian
Literacy rate	99% (2015 World Factbook)
Deaf population	5,000
International conventions	CDE (1993), CPPDCE (2006), CSICH (2006), FCPNM (1996), ICCPR (1993), UNCRPD (2010), UNDRIP (2007)
General references	Sebeok 1963

Language counts

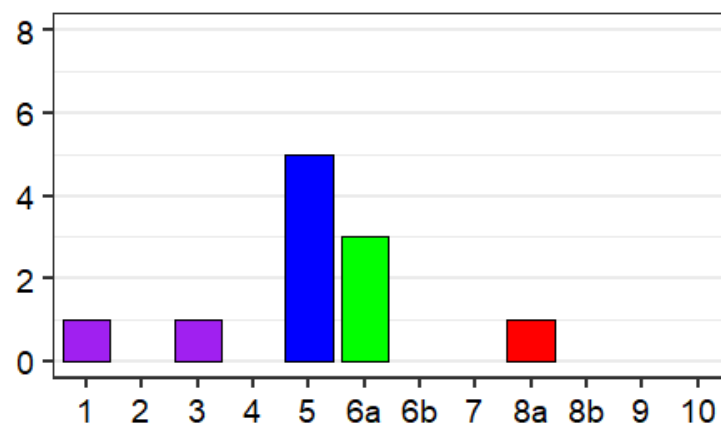
The number of established languages listed for Moldova is 11. All are living languages. Of these, 3 are indigenous and 8 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 2 are institutional, 5 are developing, 3 are vigorous, and 1 is dying. Also listed are 2 unestablished languages.



See the next page for an explanation of the summary categories for language vitality used in the above counts and graph.

## Language Status Profile

The following histogram gives a graphic profile of the established languages in Moldova with respect to their status of language development versus language endangerment. This includes all of the languages appearing in the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) that report an EGIDS level after *Status*; macrolanguages and unestablished languages are not included in the profile. The horizontal axis plots the estimated level of development or endangerment as measured on the EGIDS scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The height of each bar indicates the number of languages that are estimated to be at the given level. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 21) in order to see the specific languages for each level.



The color coding of the bars in the histogram above matches the color scheme used in the summary profile graph on the preceding page. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as follows:

- Purple = Institutional (EGIDS 0–4) — The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.
- Blue = Developing (EGIDS 5) — The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
- Green = Vigorous (EGIDS 6a) — The language is in vigorous use among all generations and remains unstandardized.
- Yellow = In trouble (EGIDS 6b–7) — Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
- Red = Dying (EGIDS 8a–9) — The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
- Black = Extinct (EGIDS 10) — The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

## Statistical Summaries

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) provides a detailed listing of all the languages of Moldova. This section steps back from the detail to offer a summary view of the language situation in the country. Specifically, it offers three numerical tabulations of the living established languages of Moldova and their users: by language size, by language status, and by language family.

### Summary by language size

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Moldova by number of L1 speakers. The *Population range* column categorizes the sizes of the languages by order of magnitude (in terms of the number of digits in the population of first-language speakers). Consult “Languages by Population” (page 19) for a listing of the specific languages in each range category.

The *Count* column gives the number of living established languages within the specified population range. The *Percent* column gives the share of the count for that population range as a percentage of the total number of languages given at the bottom of the Count column. The *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sum of the percentage of languages going from top to bottom in the column.

The *Total* column gives the total L1 population of all the languages in the given range category. The second *Percent* column gives the percentage of the total country population as estimated at the bottom of the Total column. Note that if the table has a row for Unknown, representing languages for which the *Ethnologue* does not have a population estimate, the calculation of population percentage is not able to take those languages into account. The final *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sums of the population percentages going from top to bottom in the column.

**Table 1:** Distribution of languages by number of first-language speakers

Population range	Living languages			Number of speakers		
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative
1,000,000 to 9,999,999	1	9.1	9.1%	2,180,000	79.97153	79.97153%
100,000 to 999,999	3	27.3	36.4%	486,000	17.82852	97.80005%
10,000 to 99,999	1	9.1	45.5%	41,800	1.53340	99.33345%
1,000 to 9,999	3	27.3	72.7%	17,570	0.64454	99.97799%
100 to 999	1	9.1	81.8%	600	0.02201	100.00000%
Unknown	2	18.2	100.0%			
<i>Totals</i>	11	100.0		2,725,970	100.00000	

## Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Moldova by their status in terms of language development or language endangerment. The *EGIDS* column categorizes the languages by their level on the EGIDS scale. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 21) for a listing of the specific languages that have been assigned to each level. Note that the EGIDS level reported here is for the status of the language in Moldova. Languages that are also used in other countries may be assigned to a different EGIDS level in those countries.

The next six columns are as in Table 1. In addition, the *Mean* column gives the average L1 population of all the languages with the given EGIDS level and the *Median* column gives the median L1 population for the languages at that level, that is, half of the languages at that level have a higher population and half have a lower population. If there are any languages with an unknown population, these are ignored in the calculation of the mean and the median.

**Table 2:** Distribution of languages by vitality status

EGIDS	Living languages			Number of speakers				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
1	1	9.1	9.1%	2,180,000	79.9715	79.9715%	2,180,000	2,180,000
3	1	9.1	18.2%	264,000	9.6846	89.6562%	264,000	264,000
5	5	45.5	63.6%	268,800	9.8607	99.5169%	53,760	74,400
6a	3	27.3	90.9%	12,570	0.4611	99.9780%	4,190	6,285
8a	1	9.1	100.0%	600	0.0220	100.0000%	600	600
<i>Totals</i>	11	100.0		2,725,970	100.0000			

## Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 11) name 3 different top-level groups. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of living established languages and their L1 populations within these families. The columns are as for table 2, with the exception that *Cumulative* is excluded since there is no inherent ordering of the families.

**Table 3:** Distribution of languages by language family

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Indo-European	7	63.6	2,600,970	95.4	371,567	74,400
Sign language	3	27.3	10,000	0.4	3,333	5,000

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Turkic	1	9.1	115,000	4.2	115,000	115,000
<i>Totals</i>	11	100.0	2,725,970	100.0		

## Alphabetical Listing of Languages

**Bulgarian** [bul]. *Users*: 41,800 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 51,900 (2014 census). *Location*: Cahul, Cantemir, Chisinau City, Gagauzia, Leova, and Taraclia districts. *Status*: 5\* (Dispersed). Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Class*: Indo-European, Balto-Slavic, Slavic, South, Eastern. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); vestiges of dual number; definite article affix; verb affixes mark person, number; tense and aspect; comparatives; 35 consonants, 6 vowels, 2 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress. *Lg Use*: 68% speak it as L1. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1864–1923. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, primary usage. Cyrillic script, Old Church Slavonic variant, 19th century, experimental usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Christian. *Maps*: 17:1, 18:1. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 7,745,340 (as L1: 6,541,540; as L2: 1,203,800). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Turkey. Also established in: Hungary, Romania, Ukraine. Unestablished in: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, Libya, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States.

**Crimean Tatar** [crh]. *Users*: 1,860 in Moldova. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Turkic, Southern. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Newspapers. TV. Dictionary. Grammar. *Bible*: 2016. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, used until 1928. Cyrillic script, primary usage. Latin script, official usage since 1997. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 581,340. Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: Ukraine. Also established in: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Uzbekistan. Unestablished in: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan.

**French** [fra]. Autonym: français. *Users*: 54,600 in Moldova (Marcoux et al 2022), L2 users. *Status*: 5\* (Dispersed). *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Gallo-Romance, Gallo-Rhaetian, Oïl, French. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final for common adjectives, numbers, possessives, but most attributive adjectives come after the noun; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 20 consonant and 14 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; syllable-timed stress. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1530–2000. *Writing*: Braille script. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Andorra, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Monaco, Switzerland. Also established in 95 other countries and unestablished in 24 more.

**Gagauz** [gag] (Gagauzi). Autonym: Gagauz dili, Gagauzça. *Users*: 115,000 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 126,000 (2014 census). *Location*: Basarabeasca, Cahul, Cantemir, Cimislia, Criuleni, Gagauzia, Leova, and Taraclia districts; Chisinau City. *Status*: 5\* (Developing). Statutory language of provincial identity in Gagauzia (1994, Constitution, Articles 3(1), 3(2)). *Class*: Turkic, Southern, Turkish. *Dialects*: Bulgar Gagauzi, Maritime

Gagauzi. Reportedly similar to Turkish [tur], but uses Russian Orthodox Christian religious vocabulary in contrast to Islamic vocabulary of Turkish. *Lg Use*: 89% speak it as L1. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. NT: 2006. *DLS*: Ascending (0.29). *Writing*: Cyrillic script, used between 1957–1991. Greek script, used until 1957. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Christian. *Maps*: 17:5, 18:5. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 146,690. Also established in: Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine. Unestablished in: Russian Federation.

**German, Standard** [deu]. Autonym: Deutsch. *Users*: 6,700 in Moldova (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, High German, German, Middle German, East Middle German. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); definite and indefinite articles; case-marking (4 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 22 consonants, 22 vowels, 3 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on first syllable of the root. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1466–2016. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Latin script, Fraktur variant, used until 1940. Runic script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 133,245,880 (as L1: 75,282,080; as L2: 57,963,800). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Italy. Also established in 40 other countries and unestablished in 22 more.

**Moldova Sign Language** [vsi]. *Users*: 5,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 5,000–13,000 deaf signers in Moldova for all sign languages, assuming 0.2%–0.5% of total population. Other estimates: 5,000 (2017 N. Andrianova), 17,500 (2014 IMB). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2012, Article 25(1), Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, No. 60). *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Dialects*: None known. Relatively high lexical similarity to sign languages in Russia [rsl] and Ukraine [ukl] (Bickford 2005, 2020 N. Andrianova). *Lg Use*: Used by all. Some also use Romanian [ron], primarily written. *Lg Dev*: Agency: Association of the Deaf of the Republic of Moldova. *DLS*: Still. *Other*: Moldova Sign Language and Russian Sign Language [rsl] are not clearly distinguished in Moldova, with both names being used, often interchangeably. There is a tendency to favor one or the other name depending on a person's ethnic identity. Lexically they are very similar, with a high degree of mutual intelligibility, except that some people mouth and fingerspell in Russian [rus], while others mouth and fingerspell in Romanian [ron] (2020 N. Andrianova). Sign language recognized as the official language of deaf people, as the first language in deaf education, and as the main means of communication between deaf people and others. Government measures to encourage media to make their information services available to deaf people. Christian.

**Romani, Balkan** [rmn] (Romani éhib). Autonym: Romani, Romani éhib. *Users*: 7,570 in Moldova (2014 census). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 6a\* (Vigorous). *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Western, Romani, Balkan. *Dialect*: Ursári (Usari). *Lg Dev*: Printed or pre-recorded Romani language materials may not be understandable outside the country (or context of surrounding languages) in which they were produced. Literature. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 2015. *Writing*: Cyrillic script, used in Bulgaria. Greek script, used in Greece. Latin script, used in Serbia. *Other*: Non-indigenous.

Ethnic groups: Ursári (Moldova), Karamítika (Ukraine), Romá (Crimean Peninsula). Muslim. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 803,740 (as L1: 603,740; as L2: 200,000). Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: Serbia. Also established in: Bulgaria, Greece, Iran, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine. Unestablished in: France, Germany, Italy, Sweden.

**Romanian** [ron] (Moldovan, Română, Roumanian, Rumanian). *Users*: 2,180,000 in Moldova (2014 census). 1,540,000 Moldavian and 640,000 Romanian (2014 census). Ethnic population: 2,260,000 (2014 census). 2,070,000 Moldovan and 193,000 Romanian (2014 census). *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 1 (National). Statutory national language (2013, Constitutional Court, Jts. 8b and 41b). *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Eastern. *Dialect*: Bessarabian (Basarabean, Basarabian, Bassarabian). *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head initial; gender (masculine/feminine/ambigeneric); indefinite article and definite article suffix; case-marking (2 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; 22 consonants, 7 vowels, 2 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress. *Lg Use*: Many Gypsies in Moldova and southern Ukraine speak Romanian dialect as L1. Most also use Russian [rus]. *Lg Dev*: Taught in most primary and secondary schools. Taught in most tertiary schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1688–1989. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, official usage in Moldova until 1991. Cyrillic script, Old Church Slavonic variant, 1688, experimental usage. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Christian. *Maps*: 17:9, 17:9, 18:9. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 24,478,820 (as L1: 24,461,820; as L2: 17,000). Also indigenous in: Romania, Ukraine. Also established in: Hungary, Israel, Serbia. Unestablished in: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan.

**Romanian Sign Language** [rms]. *Location*: Briceni, Cantemir, Cahul, Edinet, Falesti, Glodeni, Hincesti, Leova, Nisporeni, Riscani, and Ungheni districts; scattered in areas named above which border Romania. *Status*: 6a\* (Vigorous). *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Type*: One-handed fingerspelling. *Lg Dev*: TV. Videos. Dictionary. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 24,600. Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: Romania.

**Russian** [rus]. *Users*: 1,714,000 in Moldova, all users. L1 users: 264,000 in Moldova (2014 census). L2 users: 1,450,000 (Arefyev 2012). Ethnic population: 112,000 (2014 census). *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Class*: Indo-European, Balto-Slavic, Slavic, East. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives after noun heads; adjectives, numerals before noun heads; question word initial; 1 prefix on a word; recursive addition of suffixes allowed; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); no articles; case-marking (6 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense and aspect; comparatives; 32 consonants, 5 vowels, 4 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress. *Lg Use*: Most also use Romanian [ron]. Used as L2 by Romanian [ron], Russian Sign Language [rsl]. *Lg Dev*: Taught in some primary and secondary schools. Taught in some tertiary schools. Fully

developed. Bible: 1876–2011. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Map*: 17:10. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 254,997,130 (as L1: 146,954,150; as L2: 107,987,980). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine. Also established in 16 other countries and unestablished in 30 more.

**Russian Sign Language** [rsl]. *Users*: 5,000 in Moldova (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 5,000–13,000 deaf signers in Moldova for all sign languages, assuming 0.2%–0.5% of total population. Other estimates: 5,000 (2017 N. Andrianova), 17,500 (2014 IMB). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 6a (Vigorous). *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Type*: One-handed fingerspelling (Cyrillic script). *Lg Use*: Used by all. Some also use Russian [rus], primarily written. *Lg Dev*: TV. Videos. Dictionary. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Moldova Sign Language [vsi] and Russian Sign Language are not clearly distinguished in Moldova; see further comments in entry for Moldova SL. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 909,000. Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: Russian Federation. Also established in: Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Unestablished in: Israel.

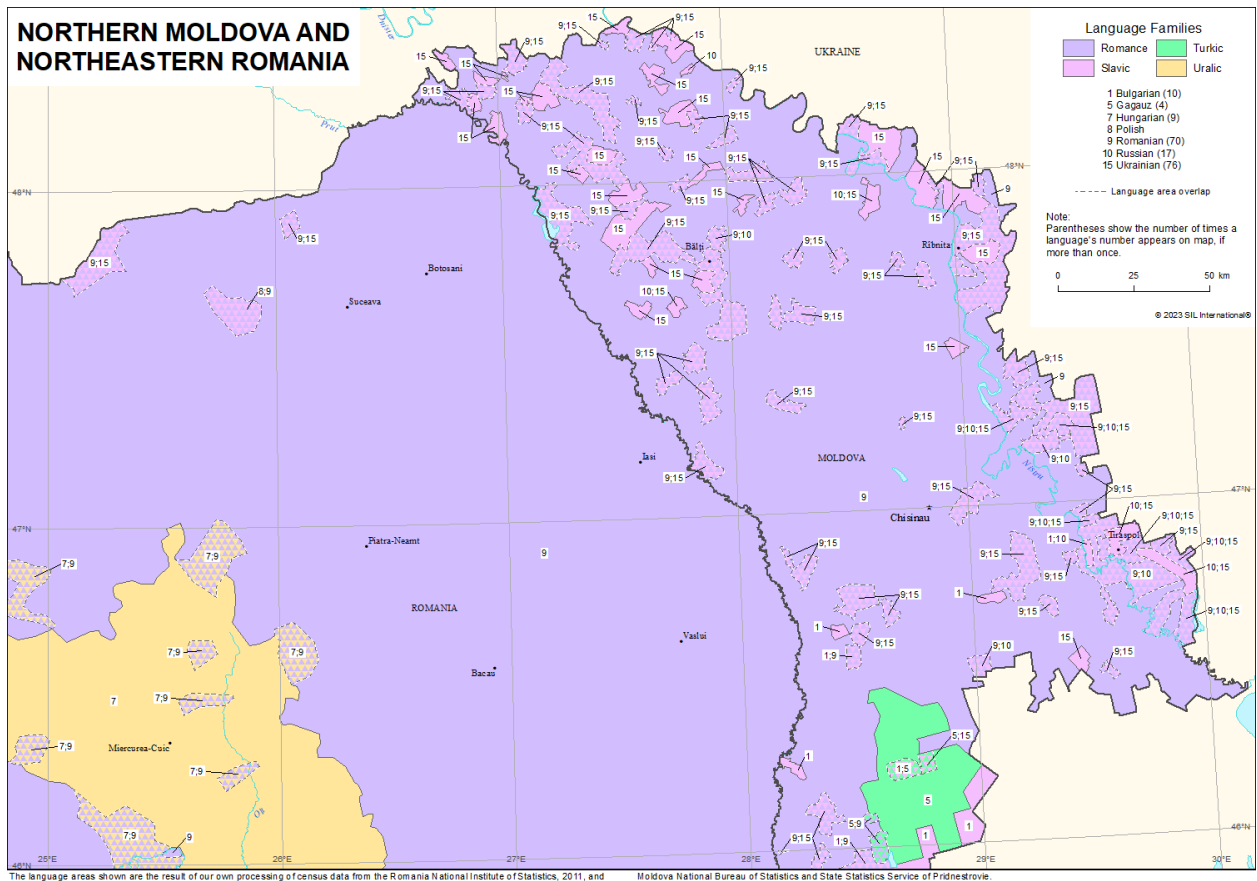
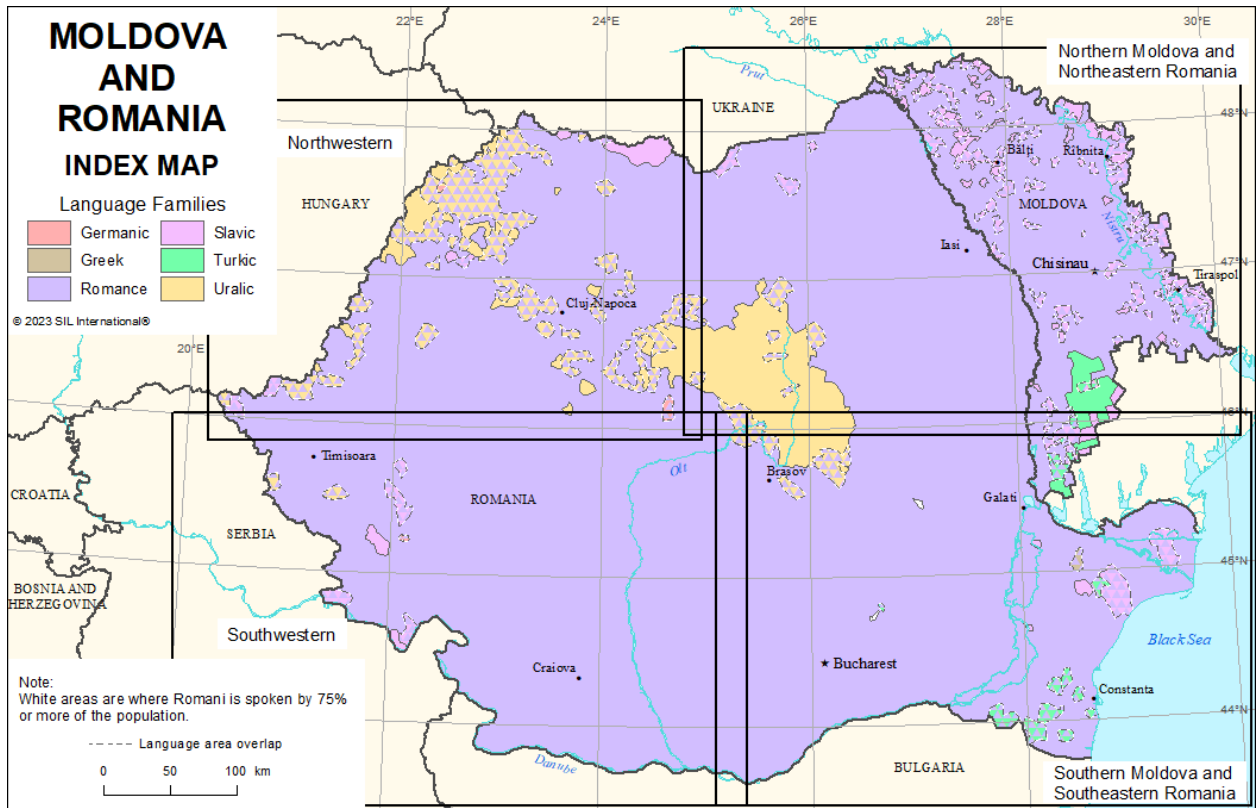
**Ukrainian** [ukr]. *Users*: 107,000 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 181,000 (2014 census). *Location*: Briceni, Cimisia, Donduseni, Drochia, Edinet, Falesti, Floresti, Glodeni, Ocnita, Riscani, and Singerei districts. *Status*: 5\* (Dispersed). Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Class*: Indo-European, Balto-Slavic, Slavic, East. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); no articles; case-marking (7 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense and aspect; comparatives; 32 consonant and 6 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; free stress. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1903–2020. *Writing*: Cyrillic script. Latin script, used in the 19th century, limited usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Maps*: 17:15, 17:15, 18:15. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 33,026,920 (as L1: 26,862,920; as L2: 6,164,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine. Also established in: Brazil, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland. Unestablished in: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan.

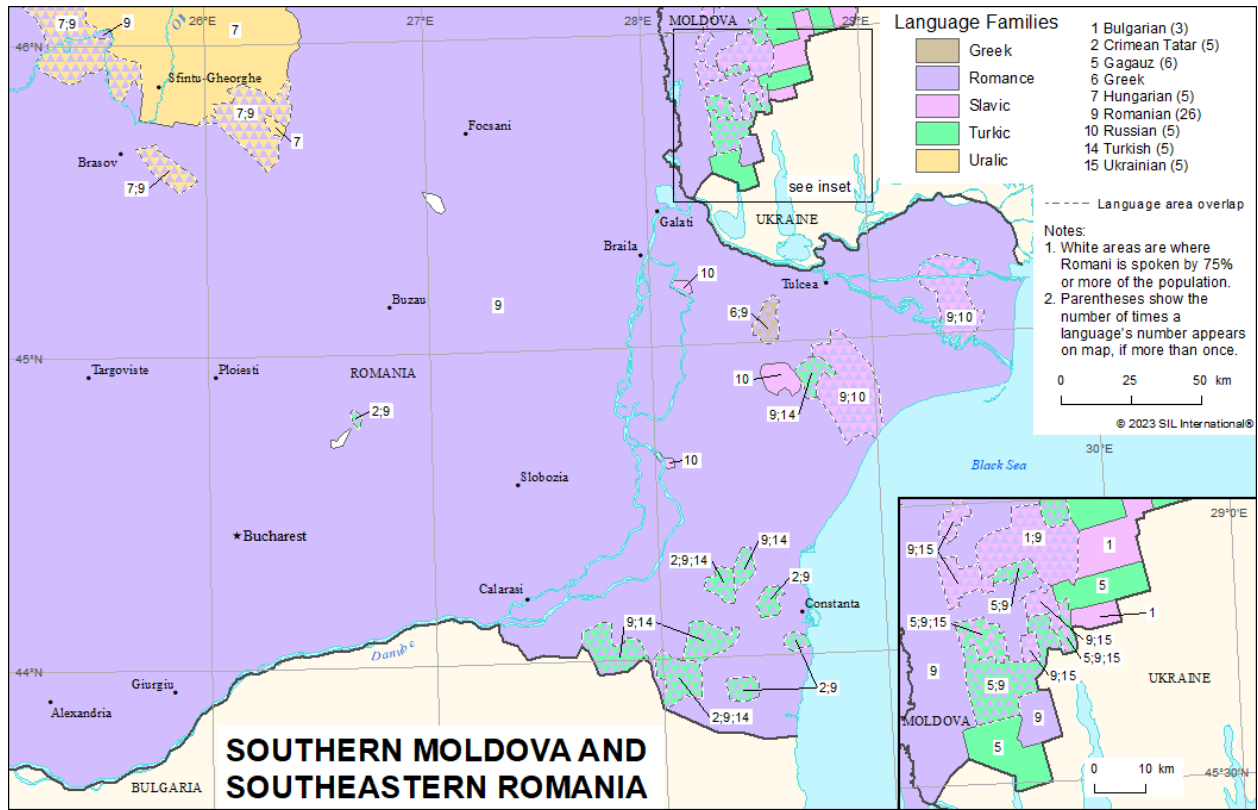
**Yiddish, Eastern** [ydd]. *Users*: 600 in Moldova (2018). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 8a (Moribund). Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, High German, Yiddish. *Dialect*: Southeastern Yiddish (Bessarabian Yiddish). *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; gender (masculine, feminine, neuter); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; 20 consonant, 6 vowels and 3 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on first syllable. *Lg Use*: Older adults only. One-quarter to one-half of the community is elderly. Shifted to Romanian [ron]. *Lg Dev*: Periodicals. Radio. Grammar. Bible: 1821–1936. *Writing*: Hebrew script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 408,547 (as L1: 401,947; as L2: 6,600).

Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Indigenous in: Ukraine. Also established in 19 other countries and unestablished in 3 more.

## **Language Maps**

Moldova and Romania Index Map	17
Northern Moldova and Northeast Romania	17
Southern Moldova and Southeastern Romania	18





## Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Moldova are listed in order of their population of first-language speakers within the country, from highest to lowest. The entries report just the population and status elements.

### 1,000,000 to 9,999,999

**Romanian** [[ron](#)] *Users:* 2,180,000 in Moldova (2014 census). 1,540,000 Moldavian and 640,000 Romanian (2014 census). Ethnic population: 2,260,000 (2014 census). 2,070,000 Moldovan and 193,000 Romanian (2014 census). *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national language (2013, Constitutional Court, Jts. 8b and 41b). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 24,478,820 (as L1: 24,461,820; as L2: 17,000).

### 100,000 to 999,999

**Russian** [[rus](#)] *Users:* 264,000 in Moldova (2014 census). 1,714,000 in Moldova, all users. L2 users: 1,450,000 (Arefyev 2012). Ethnic population: 112,000 (2014 census). *Status:* 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 254,997,130 (as L1: 146,954,150; as L2: 107,987,980).

**Gagauz** [[gag](#)] *Users:* 115,000 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 126,000 (2014 census). *Status:* 5\* (Developing). Statutory language of provincial identity in Gagauzia (1994, Constitution, Articles 3(1), 3(2)). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 146,690.

**Ukrainian** [[ukr](#)] *Users:* 107,000 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 181,000 (2014 census). *Status:* 5\* (Dispersed). Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 33,026,920 (as L1: 26,862,920; as L2: 6,164,000).

### 10,000 to 99,999

**Bulgarian** [[bul](#)] *Users:* 41,800 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 51,900 (2014 census). *Status:* 5\* (Dispersed). Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 7,745,340 (as L1: 6,541,540; as L2: 1,203,800).

### 1,000 to 9,999

**Romani, Balkan** [[rnm](#)] *Users:* 7,570 in Moldova (2014 census). *Status:* 6a\* (Vigorous). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 803,740 (as L1: 603,740; as L2: 200,000).

**German, Standard** [[deu](#)] *Users:* 6,700 in Moldova (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 133,245,880 (as L1: 75,282,080; as L2: 57,963,800).

**Moldova Sign Language** [[vsi](#)] *Users*: 5,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 5,000–13,000 deaf signers in Moldova for all sign languages, assuming 0.2%–0.5% of total population. Other estimates: 5,000 (2017 N. Andrianova), 17,500 (2014 IMB). *Status*: 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2012, Article 25(1), Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, No. 60).

**Russian Sign Language** [[rsl](#)] *Users*: 5,000 in Moldova (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 5,000–13,000 deaf signers in Moldova for all sign languages, assuming 0.2%–0.5% of total population. Other estimates: 5,000 (2017 N. Andrianova), 17,500 (2014 IMB). *Status*: 6a (Vigorous). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 909,000.

**Crimean Tatar** [[crh](#)] *Users*: 1,860 in Moldova. *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 581,340.

## 100 to 999

**Yiddish, Eastern** [[ydd](#)] *Users*: 600 in Moldova (2018). *Status*: 8a (Moribund). Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 408,547 (as L1: 401,947; as L2: 6,600).

## Unknown

**French** [[fra](#)] *Users*: L2 users: 54,600 in Moldova (Marcoux et al 2022), L2 users. *Status*: 5\* (Dispersed). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030).

**Romanian Sign Language** [[rms](#)] *Status*: 6a\* (Vigorous). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 24,600.

## Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Moldova are listed in order of their status within the country as represented by their level on the EGIDs scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The language entries are reduced to just the information elements that are relevant to assessing the EGIDS level: population, status, language use, language development, and writing.

### 1 (National)

**Romanian** [[ron](#)] *Users*: 2,180,000 in Moldova (2014 census). 1,540,000 Moldavian and 640,000 Romanian (2014 census). Ethnic population: 2,260,000 (2014 census). 2,070,000 Moldovan and 193,000 Romanian (2014 census). *Status*: Statutory national language (2013, Constitutional Court, Jts. 8b and 41b). *Lg Use*: Many Gypsies in Moldova and southern Ukraine speak Romanian dialect as L1. Most also use Russian [[rus](#)]. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, official usage in Moldova until 1991. Cyrillic script, Old Church Slavonic variant, 1688, experimental usage. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 24,478,820 (as L1: 24,461,820; as L2: 17,000).

### 3 (Wider communication)

**Russian** [[rus](#)] *Users*: 1,714,000 in Moldova, all users. L1 users: 264,000 in Moldova (2014 census). L2 users: 1,450,000 (Arefyev 2012). Ethnic population: 112,000 (2014 census). *Status*: De facto national working language. *Lg Use*: Most also use Romanian [[ron](#)]. Used as L2 by Romanian [[ron](#)], Russian Sign Language [[rsl](#)]. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 254,997,130 (as L1: 146,954,150; as L2: 107,987,980).

### 5 (Developing)

**Gagauz** [[gag](#)] *Users*: 115,000 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 126,000 (2014 census). *Status*: Statutory language of provincial identity in Gagauzia (1994, Constitution, Articles 3(1), 3(2)). *Lg Use*: 89% speak it as L1. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. NT: 2006. *Writing*: Cyrillic script, used between 1957–1991. Greek script, used until 1957. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 146,690.

**Moldova Sign Language** [[vsi](#)] *Users*: 5,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 5,000–13,000 deaf signers in Moldova for all sign languages, assuming 0.2%–0.5% of total population. Other estimates: 5,000 (2017 N. Andrianova), 17,500 (2014 IMB). *Status*: Recognized language (2012, Article 25(1), Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, No. 60). *Lg Use*: Used by all. Some also use Romanian [[ron](#)], primarily written.

## 5 (Dispersed)

**Bulgarian** [[bul](#)] *Users*: 41,800 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 51,900 (2014 census). *Status*: Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Lg Use*: 68% speak it as L1. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, primary usage. Cyrillic script, Old Church Slavonic variant, 19th century, experimental usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 7,745,340 (as L1: 6,541,540; as L2: 1,203,800).

**French** [[fra](#)] *Users*: 54,600 in Moldova (Marcoux et al 2022), L2 users. *Writing*: Braille script. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030).

**Ukrainian** [[ukr](#)] *Users*: 107,000 in Moldova (2014 census). Ethnic population: 181,000 (2014 census). *Status*: Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Writing*: Cyrillic script. Latin script, used in the 19th century, limited usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 33,026,920 (as L1: 26,862,920; as L2: 6,164,000).

## 6a (Vigorous)

**Romani, Balkan** [[rmn](#)] *Users*: 7,570 in Moldova (2014 census). *Writing*: Cyrillic script, used in Bulgaria. Greek script, used in Greece. Latin script, used in Serbia. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 803,740 (as L1: 603,740; as L2: 200,000).

**Romanian Sign Language** [[rms](#)] *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 24,600.

**Russian Sign Language** [[rsl](#)] *Users*: 5,000 in Moldova (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 5,000–13,000 deaf signers in Moldova for all sign languages, assuming 0.2%–0.5% of total population. Other estimates: 5,000 (2017 N. Andrianova), 17,500 (2014 IMB). *Lg Use*: Used by all. Some also use Russian [[rus](#)], primarily written. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 909,000.

## 8a (Moribund)

**Yiddish, Eastern** [[ydd](#)] *Users*: 600 in Moldova (2018). *Status*: Recognized language (2001, National Minority Law, Article 6(1)). *Lg Use*: Older adults only. One-quarter to one-half of the community is elderly. Shifted to Romanian [[ron](#)]. *Writing*: Hebrew script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 408,547 (as L1: 401,947; as L2: 6,600).

## Unestablished

**Crimean Tatar** [[crh](#)] *Users*: 1,860 in Moldova. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, used until 1928. Cyrillic script, primary usage. Latin script, official usage since 1997. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 581,340.

**German, Standard** [[deu](#)] *Users*: 6,700 in Moldova (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Latin script, Fraktur variant, used until

1940. Runic script, no longer in use. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 133,245,880 (as L1: 75,282,080; as L2: 57,963,800).

## Languages by District

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the top-level administrative subdivisions within Moldova. Under the name of each district is a list of the language communities that are located within its area.

### **Basarabeasca**

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Briceni**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Cahul**

Bulgarian [bul], 11

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Cantemir**

Bulgarian [bul], 11

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Chisinau City**

Bulgarian [bul], 11

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Cimislia**

Gagauz [gag], 11

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Criuleni**

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Donduseni**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Drochia**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Edinet**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Falesti**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Floresti**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Gagauzia**

Bulgarian [bul], 11

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Glodeni**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Leova**

Bulgarian [bul], 11

Gagauz [gag], 11

### **Ocnita**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Riscani**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Singerei**

Ukrainian [ukr], 14

### **Taraclia**

Bulgarian [bul], 11

Gagauz [gag], 11

## Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Moldova. The entries in this index represent the full path in the linguistic family tree from the highest level grouping down to the lowest. All the languages listed in the same entry are members of the same lowest-level subgroup. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language.

### **Indo-European, Balto-Slavic, Slavic, East**

Russian [rus], [13](#)

Ukrainian [ukr], [14](#)

### **Indo-European, Balto-Slavic, Slavic, South, Eastern**

Bulgarian [bul], [11](#)

### **Indo-European, Germanic, West, High German, Yiddish**

Yiddish, Eastern [ydd], [14](#)

### **Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Western, Romani, Balkan**

Romani, Balkan [rmn], [12](#)

### **Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Eastern**

Romanian [ron], [13](#)

### **Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Gallo-Romance, Gallo-Rhaetian, Oil, French**

French [fra], [11](#)

### **Sign language, Deaf community sign language**

Moldova Sign Language [vsi], [12](#)

Romanian Sign Language [rms], [13](#)

Russian Sign Language [rsl], [14](#)

### **Turkic, Southern, Turkish**

Gagauz [gag], [11](#)

## Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 13 three-letter codes that are used in this work to uniquely identify languages. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. All codes listed are part of the ISO 639-3 standard; see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

<b>bul</b>	Bulgarian, <a href="#">11</a>	<b>ron</b>	Romanian, <a href="#">13</a>
<b>crh</b>	Crimean Tatar, <a href="#">11</a>	<b>rsl</b>	Russian Sign Language, <a href="#">14</a>
<b>deu</b>	German, Standard, <a href="#">12</a>	<b>rus</b>	Russian, <a href="#">13</a>
<b>fra</b>	French, <a href="#">11</a>	<b>ukr</b>	Ukrainian, <a href="#">14</a>
<b>gag</b>	Gagauz, <a href="#">11</a>	<b>vsi</b>	Moldova Sign Language, <a href="#">12</a>
<b>rmn</b>	Romani, Balkan, <a href="#">12</a>	<b>ydd</b>	Yiddish, Eastern, <a href="#">14</a>
<b>rms</b>	Romanian Sign Language, <a href="#">13</a>		

## Language Name Index

This index lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. The following abbreviations are used in the index entries: *alt.* ‘alternate name for’; *alt. dial.* ‘alternate name for a dialect of’; *dial.* ‘primary name for a dialect of’; *pej. alt.* ‘pejorative alternate name for’; and *pej. alt. dial.* ‘pejorative alternate name for a dialect of’. Each index entry resolves to the primary name for the language with which the indexed name is associated, followed by square brackets containing the unique three-letter language code from ISO 639-3. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. If the language appears on a map, the entry for the primary name also lists page numbers for the maps on which the language occurs.

- Basarabean**, *alt. dial.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Basarabian**, *alt. dial.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Bassarabian**, *alt. dial.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Bessarabian**, *dial.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Bessarabian Yiddish**, *alt. dial.* Yiddish, Eastern [ydd], 14
- Bulgar Gagauzi**, *dial.* Gagauz [gag], 11
- Bulgarian** [bul], 11, 17, 18
- French** [fra], 11
- Gagauz** [gag], 11, 17, 18
- Gagauz dili**, *alt.* Gagauz [gag], 11
- Gagauzça**, *alt.* Gagauz [gag], 11
- Gagauzi**, *alt.* Gagauz [gag], 11
- Standard German**, *see* German, Standard [deu], 12
- Maritime Gagauzi**, *dial.* Gagauz [gag], 11
- Moldova Sign Language** [vsi], 12, 0
- Moldovan**, *alt.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Română**, *alt.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Romani čhib**, *alt.* Romani, Balkan [rmn], 12
- Romani, Balkan** [rmn], 12  
*see* Romani, Balkan [rmn], 12
- Romanian** [ron], 13, 17, 18
- Romanian Sign Language** [rms], 13, 0
- Roumanian**, *alt.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Rumanian**, *alt.* Romanian [ron], 13
- Russian** [rus], 13, 17
- Russian Sign Language** [rsl], 14, 0
- Southeastern Yiddish**, *dial.* Yiddish, Eastern [ydd], 14
- Ukrainian** [ukr], 14, 17, 18
- Ursári**, *dial.* Romani, Balkan [rmn], 12
- Usari**, *alt. dial.* Romani, Balkan [rmn], 12
- Yiddish, Eastern** [ydd], 14  
*see* Yiddish, Eastern [ydd], 14

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