

Somehow European

The project follows young people in the Republic of Moldova on their country's path toward the European Union. Moldova has been an EU candidate since 2022, but the idea of "Europe" remains contested in a nation that only gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. A 2024 referendum on EU membership passed by just over 50 percent, revealing a deep split across generations and society.

Somehow European explores what it means to grow up in this transitional moment. Through portraits, everyday scenes, and political engagement, the work documents a generation negotiating identity, hope, and belonging while questioning the choices of both the past and present.

This project traces the emotional and visual space in which "Europe" becomes both a promise and a question, capturing the tensions, aspirations, and reflections of young Moldovans as they navigate a future that is still being defined.



Of Moldova's roughly 2.4 million population, about 700,000 live in Chișinău, while over 1 million have moved abroad.



Vasile is the founder of the queer magazine '*Bangbang*' and produces a video podcast about the elections, combating Russian disinformation. He is considering leaving Moldova because he feels unable to fully express himself publicly.



During the Pride march in June, a counter-protest organized by the Orthodox Church took place, attempting to reach the location of the march.



Alina is pursuing a bachelor's degree in national law and is considering doing her master's abroad before returning to Moldova to contribute to change. She is concerned about the brain drain, noting that many educated people leave the country. To cover her tuition, she works extensively as a dance teacher. In the past, she received a scholarship but asked her professor to give her lower grades, as scholarship recipients would otherwise receive additional work.



Bălți, home to a large Russian-speaking population, preserves a Russian World War II tank as a testament to the city's liberation.



Nikita grew up in Russia and rode BMX professionally as a teenager, competing and sponsored by an American energy drink brand. After things changed, he moved to Chişinău. With no BMX scene in Moldova, he now rides a road bike with the '*Basarabian Fixed-Gear*' crew.



In 2022, over 350,000 people fleeing Ukraine passed through Moldova — while the night train between Chişinău and Kyiv, running every second day, remains a vital link for those living in or traveling through Moldova to Ukraine.



Second-hand objects spread across a cloth near Chişinău Railway Station — a hidden archive of lived life in Moldova.



Felicia lives near the Ukrainian border and teaches at the same school she once attended. While pursuing a PhD in Romance stylistics, she gives private lessons to support her family. With her earnings, she built the house where she now lives with her husband and their son. Her husband, a reserve soldier, is currently unemployed; she hopes he might work in the EU for a while



To reinforce a sense of 'European' identity, European flags frequently appear throughout the streets of Chişinău."



Ilinca waits in the stairwell for her older sister Sabrina, who is leaving to study in Germany after completing high school in Romania at a European school. Their parents both work for a German company and want the best possible future for their children. Although sending Ilinca to the same school would be the better option, her mother hesitates — she doesn't want to be left alone.



An electric toy quad is parked in the entrance of a large building housing around 100 apartments.



Vlad, a software engineer who previously worked at Bosch in Germany, returned to Chişinău with his partner to raise their son.

Before the September parliamentary elections, they feared the pro-European party 'PAS' might lose — they would have left the country. They debated if its worth to bring the piano into the new apartment or not.



The pro-European party PAS conducted door-to-door information campaigns in rural area speaking directly with people to raise awareness ahead of the elections. Here in Gura Galbenei.



Burning day and night, the Eternal Flame keeps alive the memory of the liberation.



Maksim is active in the Patriotic Electoral Bloc, a coalition of the Socialist and Communist parties. He switched universities after the Romanian and Russian classes were merged, as he wants to continue studying in Russian. While he generally supports a European future for the country, he believes ties with Russia should be maintained, warning that breaking contact could be dangerous.



On the Friday before the parliamentary elections, supporters of the pro-European party ended the campaign in front of the government building of the Republic of Moldova.



A small group of friends celebrates a birthday in a studio inside the Film Moldova building, a post-Soviet space repurposed.



A woman poses on the steps of the Palatul Republicii for a photo shoot.