

The average U.S. Peace Corps volunteer spends about 800 days serving in a foreign country.

November 2016 News and activities in Rîșcani, Republic of Moldova • Mark Gilchrist, U.S. Peace Corps volunteer
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Moldova & North Carolina enjoy 20 years

Begun after the Soviet Union breakup, the partnership has been beneficial to Moldova.

1996 marked the beginning of a strong and mutually-beneficial relationship between the American state of North Carolina and the Republic of Moldova, a former Soviet Bloc country.



After the Soviet Union broke up, the U.S. wanted to use its army peacefully, and ordered its National Guard units, (local militia,) to partner with countries around the world. North Carolina and Moldova became partners.

Then, in 1999, the North Carolina state government joined the partnership, improving it dramatically.

North Carolina has a climate and geography similar to Moldova, but is warmer, since it is 1,300 miles farther south.

About 4 times the size of Moldova, North Carolina has about 3 times the people. The state lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Appalachian Mountains.

Thousands of North Carolinians have visited Moldova in this partnership, and



Moldovan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Andrei Galbur, right, shakes hands with North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine Marshall in October, 2015, after renewing a partnership agreement between the republic and the U.S. state.

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hundreds of Moldovans have visited North Carolina, all to strengthen bonds and improve the health and safety of Moldovans.

North Carolina military personnel have trained Moldovan military and police on anti-terrorism, cyber defense, minesweep-

ing, emergency medicine, and other disciplines, not only in Moldova, but also in Kosovo and Iraq.

Helping Moldova reach NATO certifications, North Carolina soldiers have participated in about 300 projects here. They,

and other North Carolinians, have:

- Built playgrounds.
- Built a medical clinic.
- Trained medical professionals.
- Provided dental services and immunizations to 25,000 Moldovan children.
- Donated \$1 million in medical equipment, well pumps, books, clothes, mine-detecting equipment and computers.
- North Carolina has hosted more than 250 Moldovans for training in agriculture, business, cooperatives, public health, NGOs and marketing.

The past 20 years have been enriching and exciting, building a foundation for a partnership between continents and former enemies that can only grow stronger.



Medical textbooks recently donated by North Carolinians to Moldovans.

Moldovans love concrete!

Most buildings in Moldova are made of concrete, either prefabricated or block, and covered with paint, stucco or tile. This is in stark contrast to the U.S, where even in the north, most homes are built of wood.

Cement has been the universal building material here, because it's cheap and it lasts forever - when mixed correctly, concrete actually becomes stronger with age. Moldova has very limited timber reserves, with most of its land used for farming. Sawn lumber is used mostly for roofing structures, trim, and furniture, and as a main source of heat during long winters.

The use of cement evolved in a natural progression from stone, which had been used in this area for centuries.

Moldova has vast reserves of limestone, a key ingredient of cement. Evidence of this are two massive wine cellars here; Mileștii Mici and Cricova, with more than 100 miles of large tunnels carved out of them. After they pulled out as much limestone as they could, they put in as much wine as they could - millions of bottles.

Everything is concrete, from concrete stairs to concrete walls, columns, railings, planters and benches. Schools, offices, stores and restaurants - all concrete.

One benefit of this amazing material is fire safety. Fire stations here are small, and they are not busy fighting house fires.

Nikita Khrushchev launched a massive project in the 1950s to design and build millions of apartment units throughout

the new Soviet Union, and give the communist lifestyle a foothold. These "Khrushchyovkas" were very small, (323-646 square feet) and many had shared bathrooms. Most were less than five stories tall with no elevators, and many are still in use, long after their planned lifetimes.

Later apartments and taller buildings would be modified or combined to create larger and more modern units.

For energy efficiency, double-paned aluminum window units and metal doors are installed, and buildings are wrapped in 4-5 inches of styrofoam block insulation, covered with stucco and paint.

Living in concrete has built strong character in Moldovan people. Compared to America, very few homes are modified, or torn down and rebuilt, creating far less waste and a healthy attitude of being satisfied with what one has.



The Presidential building in Chișinău, made of concrete.



A beautiful, ornate and durable concrete railing at Chișinău train station.



Peter Zloi, a 12th-grader at Dimitri Cantemir School, made a video interview with World War II veteran Alexandru Vasile Gavriliuc, 92.

Election results similar



Dodon



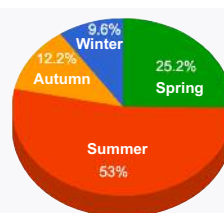
Sandu

Americans and Moldovans both elected a man, and not a woman, for president, Moldovans voted to elect Igor Dodon, a former minister of parliament, over former Education Minister Maia Sandu by a narrow margin of less than 6 percentage points.

Dodon favors closer ties with Russia, while Sandu with Europe. The theft of 1 billion Euros two years ago haunted Sandu, as many people blame her party for the loss.

Americans elected Donald Trump for president, over former first lady, senator, and secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

The U.S. President is not elected by a popular vote, (Clinton won that,) but in an "Electoral College," that holds elections in each of the 50 states. **Photos: Unimedia**



Fun Survey

I surveyed 115 people in the city of Rîșcani about what season of the year they like the most.

People here enjoy warm weather, with more than three-quarters of us liking either spring or summer, while fewer than one-quarter enjoy the cold months.



Girls build a snowman at the Casa de Cultura in Rîșcani after the first snowfall of 2016.



In November, I posted photos only for the village of Reteni - this project is taking a winter break!
Photos: Click

JOKE OF THE MONTH

How cold is it?

- +20 ° Celcius - Greeks put on sweaters.
- +5 ° - You can see breath. Russians drive with windows open.
- 0 ° - Water freezes in America, in Russia only strengthens.
- 15 ° - Cat sleeps in your bed. Norwegians wear sweaters.
- 30 ° - Cat prefers to sleep in your pajamas.
- 42 ° - Russians eat ice cream on the street.
- 60 ° - White bears start to migrate south.
- 70 ° - Hell freezes.
- 73 ° - Finland evacuates Santa Claus.
- 80 ° - Lawyers stick hands in their own pockets.
- 114 ° - Ethyl alcohol freezes. Russians are not happy.
- 273 ° - Absolute zero (no atoms move.) Russians wear boots.
- 295 ° - 90% of planet is dead. Russian soccer is world champion!

Photographs and Videos, at:

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