

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

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News and perspectives of Rîșcani and the Republic of Moldova • Mark Gilchrist, U.S. Peace Corps volunteer

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## Famous Moldovans

Moldova has given the world many people who have contributed much and become well-known outside the country – [Wikipedia](#) lists 95 “famous” Moldovans. I have found three people with ties to Moldova who have achieved extraordinary recognition around the globe.

Iteț Domnici was born in 1920 in what is now Ungheni, Moldova, and moved to the U.S. at age 9, where he became a major Hollywood writer, influencing American comedy films for generations.



Under the name **I.A.L. Diamond**, he teamed up with the legendary Billy Wilder to write nearly a dozen screenplays, including “Some Like it Hot,” which has often been voted or named one of the best films ever made.

Diamond won an Academy Award in 1960 for “The Apartment.” He lived in Beverly Hills until his death in 1988.

German President **Horst Köhler** was born in Poland

in 1943 to Elisabeth and Eduard Köhler, who had left their home in Rîșcani, Moldova three years prior amid the Nazi-Soviet Population Transfer program.



**Köhler** also served as head of the International Monetary fund from 2000 until 2004, when he was elected president of Germany. He resigned in 2010.

Fashion designer **Diane von Furstenberg's** father, Leon Halfin, grew up in Chisinau, and moved to Belgium in 1929 at age 18. She was born in 1946 in Belgium.

Both her parents were Jewish, and her mother, Liliane, had been imprisoned at Auschwitz in 1944.

Diane took the name she made famous when she married Prince Egon von Fürstenberg in 1969. Five years later, she introduced the wrap dress, which has been popular ever since, enjoying much exposure with Michelle Obama four decades later. **Photo sources: DVF, Kohler**



Fürstenberg



I visited Italy recently and loved how happy Italians are! Whenever I saw two or more of them together, they were usually laughing, joking, or just enjoying each other's company. I photographed mostly places and things, like this boat in Venice. [Click to see more photos in two albums; one artsy and one fun.](#)

## Travel & visas for Moldovans and Americans

Moldovan citizens can travel without visas or obtain visas on arrival at 101 countries, ranking the Moldovan passport as the 52nd most accepted in the world.

Residents of Moldova who qualify and obtain a Romanian passport may easily obtain visas for 153 countries. U.S. citizens can easily travel to 174 countries.

The five countries in the world for which it is hardest for citizens to obtain visas? Syria, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The seven easiest? Germany, Sweden, Finland, France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.



Plan of the agricultural market in Rîșcani that will open in Oct.

## Agricultural market at highway intersection is under construction

A new farmers market and agricultural storage facility will open later this year at the intersection of R7 & M14.

Travellers Between areas including Balți, Edinet, Rîșcani and Drochia will be able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from up to 30 vendors in a safe and accessible environment.

The 2.5-million-Euro facility will include a 400-ton warehouse and a 750-ton refrigerated warehouse, so more farmers will be able to store their crops and wait to sell them when the price increases.

The project is funded by Agenția Dezvoltare Nord and will be managed by the Rîșcani District Council. Opening is expected in October.



Want a peek at an American's view of Moldova? Here's a short video I made as a presentation for 140 people in North Carolina, who work on projects to help Moldovans. The video has photos and notes about the Peace Corps in Moldova. [Click](#)

## Moldova & EU



Last July, the **Association Agreement** that the Republic of Moldova and the European Union signed in 2014 went into full effect, improving Moldova's access to the EU market of goods and services.

The pact has Moldova in the **European Neighbourhood**, along with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, and 10 countries in North Africa.

The agreement allows Moldova to trade most goods to the EU duty-free, and lets companies more easily expand to the Union.

Some Moldovan exports have increased dramatically since 2014, according to a European Commission **press release**, including a 45% increase in sales of preserved vegetables.

In 2015, the first full provisional year of the pact, overall Moldovan exports to the EU increased by 5%, while imports from the EU decreased by 11%.

The European Union is Moldova's largest trade partner, buying 62% of the republic's exports. (Russia buys 12% and Belarus, 6%.)

The 735-page agreement lists 109 pages of wines with protected designations of origin, and requires positive changes in many areas other than commerce.

“Moldova has committed to ambitious structural reforms in key areas, such as democracy, good governance, rule of law, human rights, foreign and security policy, trade and economic development,” the EU states.

### JOKE OF THE MONTH

The pilot announced over the intercom; “I'm sorry, we have lost one engine. It is okay, as we have four engines. We will just fly slower and arrive 30 minutes later.” When the second and then the third engines died, he said the same thing, delaying our landing by one hour, and then by 90 minutes.

That's when I told the guy next to me; “I hope we don't lose the 4th engine, or we'll be up here all night!”



In February, I posted photographs that I took in September of the city of Costesti. This spring, I plan to visit 23 more villages! **Photos: Click**



“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness...”

Mark Twain

### 100 People

I asked 100 people how many countries they have visited. While 12 people have never left Moldova, 63 have visited 1-3 other countries, 16 have visited 4-6 countries, and 9 have visited more than 6.



Photographs and Videos, at:

[www.Markstrail.com](http://www.Markstrail.com)

### March

	1st	31st
Day length	11:05:27	12:46:45
Sunrise	6:44	6:45
Sunset	17:50	19:32
Full Moon		12th
Avg. Temp.	3°C	37°F
Rainfall	6cm	2.4"

### Holidays

- 1 - Martisor, 1st day of spring (MD)
- 8 - International Womens Day (MD)
- 17 - St. Patrick's Day (U.S.)
- 20 - 1st day of Spring (U.S.)

### MOLDOVAN OF THE MONTH



SVETLANA RAIFURA

For March, we honor Svetlana Raifura, a science teacher at Gimnaziul Gheorge Riscanu. Her dedication to the environment is obvious as she inspires her students in a new recycling program and makes the sciences fun to learn.

“I love children and I love ecology,” Raifura said. “So why not teach it?”