

the spirit of enterprise

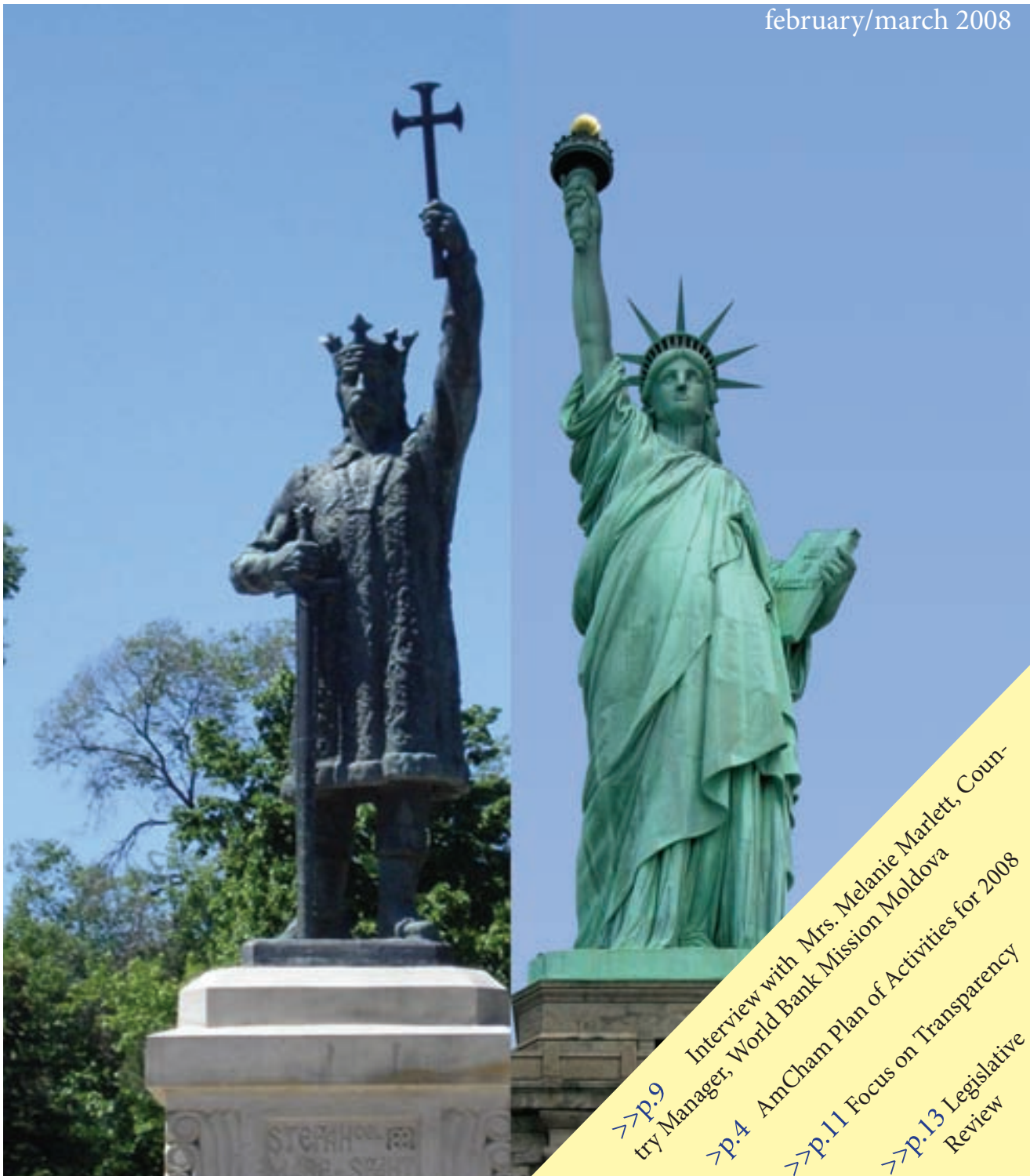
BUSINESS REVIEW



www.amcham.md

A publication of the American Chamber of Commerce in Moldova

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Business Networking and Cocktail Event	April 10
Board of Directors Meeting	April 2008
Corporate Social Responsibility Committee Meeting	April 2008
Business Networking Event	May 2008



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Dear Members of AmCham and Readers,

AmCham Moldova has recently passed one of the most difficult tests that any organization must pass: we have successfully completed our first full year of activity.

The year 2007 was full of ups and downs for AmCham, but also filled with successes. We went through a transition period at the beginning of the year when some momentum was lost, but considerable achievements were realized by the year's end. This turnaround is a testament to the dedication of the Board of Directors and members of AmCham, and, of course, the administrative staff.

Last year was very important to the success of our organization and we learned a lot. Based partly on lessons learned from last year and the results of the 2007 Membership Satisfaction Survey, we are carefully leading AmCham into new areas of activity. To this end, a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee is being organized within AmCham and we

have five General Sponsors for 2008. We also plan to increase the benefits to our members by strengthening our business advocacy activities and by implementing new programs for AmCham members, such as posting news from our member companies on our website.

One area where we are pushing development is in our publications. As you can see, this is the new format of our bi-monthly newsletter, *Business Review*. We have added new staff to help with the development of publications and we are expanding the topics that we cover in this publication to include a section dedicated to legislation and reforms, commentary on relevant issues, and general content of higher quality and more relevance to our members.

The past two months have seen a lot of activity for AmCham. We took some concrete steps towards establishing our first committee, we held the 2008 General Member Meeting, and we formed new partnerships. Not only is our range of activities increasing, but our membership base is also growing. AmCham Moldova now represents 48 companies and there are several more that are in the process of joining.

Along with increased activity and development in Moldova, AmCham has also been recognized for its efforts by other organizations. In January of this year AmCham passed an-

other milestone: we received accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This was no easy process as the U.S. Chamber does not lend accreditation to AmChams lightly. Then, a little less than one month after this accomplishment we were accredited by the European Council of American Chambers of Commerce. As a result of joining these two business associations, AmCham Moldova is linked in to the network of AmChams throughout Europe and the more than 3 million member companies in the U.S. In fact, we have received letters from other AmChams in the region congratulating us on our success.

The year ahead of us is going to be a busy one. We will continue to depend on the support of our Board of Directors, General Sponsors, and all members while we continue to develop and diversify our activities. As we have said many times before, our greatest asset is our wonderfully supportive base of members and we thank you for your dedication.

We wish you all success in 2008.

Best regards,

Jerad Scott Tietz
Acting Executive Director
Director of Member
Communications

Business Review February/March 2008

WELCOME TO AMCHAM



IN MOLDOVA, DELOITTE IS ONE OF THE LEADING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COUNTRY PROVIDING SERVICES IN FIVE PROFESSIONAL AREAS: AUDIT, CONSULTING, FINANCIAL ADVISORY, RISK MANAGEMENT AND TAX SERVICES THROUGH OVER 20 NATIONAL AND SPECIALIZED EXPATRIATE PROFESSIONALS.

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THE PHILIP MORRIS MANAGEMENT SERVICES B.V. REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA WAS OPENED IN CHISINAU IN 1996. IT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROMOTION AND MERCHANDISING OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED BY AFFILIATES OF PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL INC. AND SOLD IN MOLDOVA.

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2008 AMCHAM GENERAL SPONSORS



AMCHAM PLAN OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2008

Since AmCham was registered in September of 2006, our organization has experienced exceptional growth and today AmCham is one of the largest private business associations operating in Moldova. 2007 was a very busy year for us. We gained much valuable experience as well as a solid base of new member companies that compliment our original members and active Board of Directors. It is our plan to build on the foundation that we created last year and we are expanding and diversifying our activities in 2008.

The events that we have planned for our members in 2008 are as follows:

1. Events with the Moldovan Government – We plan on organizing quarterly events with high-level officials from the Moldovan Government in the form of roundtable discussions, seminars, and working groups.

2. Events with the United States Government – AmCham works closely with the U.S. Embassy in Moldova. Last year we had a number of events with the Embassy including a luncheon at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova. We plan on having at least two events with the U.S. Government in Moldova this year.

3. Organization of AmCham Committees – Based on feedback from our members, we have begun to organize committees.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee is the first such AmCham committee. The committees will serve as a basis for our members to collaborate on industry specific projects to help improve the business climate

and attract foreign investment in Moldova.

4. Corporate Social Responsibility – AmCham, in cooperation with the Eurasia Foundation and UNDP Moldova, organized the first International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility for Moldova in November of 2007. To expand on the success of the conference, AmCham and Eurasia Foundation have already launched a competition for journalists. The competition has journalists submit original articles about the CSR practices of companies in Moldova; the winners will receive cash prizes. AmCham will also organize other CSR events in coordination with the CSR Committee.

5. Social and Networking Events – In 2007 AmCham organized a number of social and networking events for our members. Examples of the events that AmCham will organize in 2008 include the annual 4th of July Celebration, Christmas Celebration, Thanksgiving Celebration, and various business networking and cocktail events throughout the year, which will be organized around themes, such as Human Resources and Education.

6. New Member Benefits – AmCham will now accept news from our members and post it on a special section of our website. Member companies can send us news about their accomplishments, awards, new products or services, and events. We are going to begin a member-to-member benefits program which will allow for AmCham members to receive discounts on other members' products and services.

7. Improved Publications – We are actively working to improve our publications and we have expanded our administrative team

to work on the publications. The old newsletter has the *Business Review*, and we will put a greater emphasis on the design and content of our publications this year. *Business Review* will be distributed to all AmCham members and various other organizations throughout the business community and government of Moldova.

8. Partnerships – AmCham is pursuing new partnerships for 2008. The Moldovan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and AmCham have partnered in the creation of a special edition of *Info Pro-Business*, the official publication of the MCCI. The special edition publication was an introduction to AmCham Moldova, its members, member benefits, and the organization's primary activities. The second partnership was formed with AIESEC, the world's largest youth organization. AmCham is an official content partner and will participate in AIESEC seminars by providing (or allowing our members to provide) trainings to university students on a variety of professional business topics.

9. General Sponsors – For the first time, AmCham is working with its members in this new capacity. Five AmCham members make up the group of General Sponsors for 2008: FinComBank, Moldcell, Moldova Agroindbank, Sun Communications, and XEROX. This new relationship with members will benefit both AmCham and the General Sponsors through promotion of both organizations and an increased ability for AmCham to pursue additional projects and organize events.

ACCREDITATION WITH THE U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In February of 2008, AmCham was officially accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The accreditation was a milestone for our organization and means that AmCham Moldova is now officially recognized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and linked into the global network of more than 100 American Chambers of Commerce worldwide.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses of all sizes,

sectors, and regions. It includes hundreds of associations, thousands of local chambers, and more than 100 American Chambers of Commerce in 91 countries.

From its headquarters near the White House, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce maintains a professional staff of more than 300 of the nation's top policy experts, lobbyists, lawyers, and communicators. The Washington staff is supported by eight regional offices around the U.S., an office in Brussels, an on-the-ground presence in China; and a network of business activists.

Its members include businesses of all sizes and sectors—from large Fortune 500 companies to sole proprietorships run out of the home. In fact, 96% of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's membership includes businesses with fewer than 100 employees and its leadership is equally diverse, with more than 100 corporate and small business leaders from all sectors serving on the board of directors.



THE U.S. CHAMBER'S HISTORY

The idea of a national institution to represent the unified interests of U.S. business first took shape when President William Howard Taft, in a message to Congress on December 7, 1911, addressed the need for a "central organization in touch with associations and chambers of commerce throughout the country and able to keep purely American interests in a closer touch with different phases of commercial affairs."

Four months later, on April 12, 1912, President Taft's vision became a reality when a group of 700 delegates from various commercial and trade organizations came together to create a unified body of business interest that today is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

In 1925, construction on the Chamber headquarters was

completed on property that had belonged to Daniel Webster, and the U.S. business community made it a rallying point for promoting and defending free enterprise and individual opportunity.

More than 90 years later, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has grown to represent more than 3 million businesses, nearly 3,000 state and local chambers, 830 associations, and over 90 American Chambers of Commerce abroad.

The U.S. Chamber and the legacy of Daniel Webster share more than just the hallowed ground that is now 1615 H Street Northwest. This venerable institution and this statesman's spirit share an unwavering commitment to democracy, individual opportunity, and free enterprise. They

are forever bonded by the words of Webster, which were inscribed in stone in the original Chamber building: "Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered." -- Daniel Webster, June 17, 1825, Speech Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, Charlestown, Massachusetts

Information taken from the United States Chamber of Commerce website:
<http://www.uschamber.com>.

ACCREDITATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

AmCham Moldova received word of its accreditation with the European Council of American Chambers of Commerce (ECACC) on March 11. ECACC is a network of 39 American Chambers of Commerce across Europe. Its major objectives are to: 1) promote commercial, financial and industrial relations between the United States and European countries; 2) present the views of the business community operating in the areas of the member Chambers to agencies and organizations in the United States; 3) represent, when appropriate, the views and aims of the members' interests to representatives of host country governments and other regional intergovernmental organizations.

Working since 1963, ECACC is a leading voice of international business in Europe. It is recognized both in Europe and the United States as an influential opinion-forming body actively engaged in fostering better trade

and investment relations between its chambers' host countries and the United States.

Today ECACC represents the corporate interests of more than 17,000 American and European companies, based in more than 35 countries and employing more than 20 million people. ECACC's member companies account for more than \$ 1.1 trillion in investment on both sides of the Atlantic.

Seven American Chambers of Commerce founded ECACC on May 6, 1963 in Milan, Italy. The original members were all from Western Europe. Today, virtually all European countries have AmChams that are active members.

This wide geographical spread, combined with the varying needs of different countries, leads to a large variety of structures and priorities in the American Chambers. This has

resulted in a particular focus on the importance of the exchange of information and management techniques. The combined weight of this large and dynamic business constituency can also be used to emphasize and support policy issues of transatlantic concern.

During the year, Council meetings are held on a rotating basis in different Chamber countries and a close relationship is maintained with the American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union. ECACC works closely with the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington D.C., especially at the annual ECACC conference held in Washington D.C., where senior representatives of the administration, U.S. Congress and key U.S. organizations are invited to give their views on current political and economic trends.

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ECACC

European Council of American Chambers of Commerce



European Council of American Chambers of Commerce

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AMCHAM COMMITTEE REPORT

From the very beginning, we at AmCham have strived to serve our great base of members in a unique fashion. Based on our experience from last year and the feedback that we received from our 2007 Membership Satisfaction Survey, we have placed the organization of committees within AmCham as a top priority. We hope to organize several committees and working groups, which will serve AmCham and help strengthen our business advocacy role in Moldova.

We hope that through the organization of committees that our members' interests will be promoted, offering them the possibility to share their views and ideas on some relevant common issues, as well as to achieve some common goals. We also believe activity within the committees will foster cooperation between companies within common sectors, such as Finance, ICT, Agriculture, etc., while at the same time uniting companies from multiple sectors through committees like Corporate Social Responsibility, Human Resources, and Taxes.

We are glad to inform you that we have begun to organize the first AmCham Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The goals of the CSR Committee are: to spread the CSR concept, encourage and facilitate responsible business practices, and support the improvement of CSR programs among AmCham members and in the business community at large.

The founders of the CSR Committee are 10 AmCham members developing its activities in various business sectors.

Leaders of the CSR Committee are:

CSR Committee Chair: Lucia Candu
CSR Committee Vice - Chair: Cristina Perateatco

The CSR Committee's activities are:

1. Join the Local Global Compact Network in its effort to identify and to surpass the CSR-related deficiencies in Moldovan legislation;
2. Elaborate an Annual CSR Award;
3. Organize one-day CSR Conference;
4. Provide members with access to information on the concept of CSR, principles and best practices, and promote the development of corporate CSR strategies among members;
5. Provide members with the related training;
6. Report on CSR Committee activity.



We invite every interested member to join the efforts of the CSR Committee. Interested parties should contact Mila Dodon, Project Manager and AmCham staff member responsible for committees at: miladodon@amcham.md

All members are invited to join existing and future committees and we welcome any suggestions that you may have regarding the establishments of new committees.

The complete committee framework can be found on our website: www.amcham.md

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CONTEST FOR JOURNALISTS

Aiming to promote the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and CSR activities in Moldova as well as to strengthen freedom of expression and independent press, AmCham Moldova and the Eurasia Foundation in Moldova announce the launch of the contest for journalists "Corporate Social Responsibility for Moldova." Professional and amateur journalists, reporters and photo-reporters are invited to develop and publish materials about CSR for print, audio, video and electronic national, regional and local media. The topics for these materials should be activities/actions/projects supported by companies in Moldova. Materials that promote the CSR concept are welcome as well. The time-frame for developing and publishing materials is 1 February - 30 April 2008.

The winners of the contests will be awarded as follows:

1st place winner – one \$ 500 – award

2nd place – \$ 300 – award

3rd place – \$ 100 – award

All participants will receive special awards and participation diplomas.

Selection process

An independent jury will select the winning proposals. The jury will include representatives from AmCham Moldova, Eurasia Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme in Moldova, as well as respected journalists and editors, that will select the winners according to professionalism, content and style.

Submission of materials

All submitted materials should reflect the theme of the contest. Materials must have been developed and published during the timeframe of the contest. No previously published/broadcast materials will be accepted. Materials in Romanian, Russian and English will be accepted. Each submission should include:

1. A minimum of three materials. For newspaper articles/interviews newspaper clips, indicating the date and name of publication will be accepted. Radio/TV materials should be submitted on a CD-ROM indicating the exact broadcast day and hour and the name of the media outlet. For materials published in electronic press, a copy of the article printed from the web-site and a print-out of the media outlet home page.
2. CV in Romanian or Russian.
3. Copy of the participant's national ID card.
4. A completed and signed application form.



The submission deadline is April 30, 2008, 18:00. Materials must be submitted to the Eurasia Foundation office in Moldova (49/4 Tighina Str., 3rd floor, MD 2001 Chişinău). For additional questions: Lucia Candu, Program coordinator (tel: 23 53 43, ext. 124, lcandu@eurasia.md)



MELANIE MARLETT: “YOU ARE MOST WELCOME TO JOIN US”

Interview with Mrs. Melanie Marlett, Country Manager, World Bank Mission Moldova

This summer's drought was devastating to farmers in Moldova. I understand that World Bank Mission Moldova (WBMM) will allocate \$8-10 million to help mitigate the economic consequences of this year's drought. In what sectors of the economy will WBMM allocate the money?

The Bank will provide \$6 million for irrigation through the on-going Rural Investment Support project. In addition, we will provide \$4 million for rural water supply in 50 rural villages through a new Water Supply and Sanitation project. Both the irrigation and rural water supply activities will go the World Bank Board of Directors for approval by May 2008.

AmCham Moldova recently co-organized a conference on corporate social responsibility with the Eurasia Foundation and UNDP Moldova. In your opinion how could the private sector work with the WBMM to promote Corporate Social Responsibility in Moldova?

Through that Conference we have learned that Moldova is lacking regulatory incentives for business to be more active in their CSR activities. The World Bank believes that a permanent dialogue between the business community and the Government of Moldova is essential for creating the necessary incentives. Currently, through the Competitiveness Enhancement Project (CEP) we are helping Moldova to introduce into the legislative process the Regulatory Impact Assessment, which includes consultations with the representatives of the business community whenever a

regulatory act is being passed. We very much welcome the business associations to take a more active role in those consultations.

WBMM is implementing the “Millennium Development Goals for Moldova” in order to reduce poverty, improve health care and education, and protect the environment. In your opinion, how would WBMM be able to collaborate with the business community in Moldova to attain the project's goals and objectives?

For us at the World Bank, reducing poverty means more jobs and better jobs. To achieve this, the business environment must be conducive for doing business. Through the CEP, we are helping the Government of Moldova to improve the business environment. A permanent dialogue with the business community is essential to that process. So, I would encourage businesses to be as active as possible within the Special Parliamentary Commission for Regulatory Reform. I would also urge businesses to be responsive when asked to participate in annual Cost of Doing Business Surveys. These are institutionalized instruments that we helped the Government of Moldova to put in place in order to have a structured and systematic input from the business community in the country.

According to the World Bank's “Doing Business 2008”, Moldova ranks 92nd on a global scale for the ease of doing business this year. What do you attribute to Moldova's score and what single aspect would help Moldova the most in improving the case of doing business here?



We might want to look deeper into the Doing Business Report 2008 and the corresponding rankings: 1. Ease of Starting a Business (81), 2. Dealing with Licenses process particularly construction permits (153), 3. Employing Workers (93), 4. Ease of Registering Property (46), 5. Ease of Getting Credit (97), 6. Degree of Investor's Rights Protection (98), 7. Efficiency of Paying Taxes (111), 8. Ease of Trading Across Borders (122), 9. Degree of Enforcing Contracts (17), and 10. Ease of Closing a Business (82).

To me, the “low hanging fruits” are number 5 where Moldova needs to have a credit information bureau to score better and also number 2 where the country scores 153 and definitely needs to streamline the process of issuing construction permits. The Doing Business team will visit Moldova soon and we will organize a roundtable discussion with the representatives of the business community to seek your views on what needs to be fixed in Moldova to improve the business environment and score better on the Doing Business next year. You are most welcome to join us.

THE WORLD BANK MISSION MOLDOVA

The World Bank's mission in Moldova is to help fight poverty and promote economic growth through project financing, research and advice. It helps countries improve social services, protect the environment, and help lay the foundations for better living standards.



The World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Moldova for 2005-2008, prepared in partnership with the Government of Moldova and in consultation with the business community, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and donors, was endorsed by the World Bank's Board in December 2004. It focuses on three strategic priorities, aligned with the country's plans for poverty reduction detailed in its Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which was adopted by the Government in May 2004 and endorsed by the World Bank and IMF in November 2004.

Top Priorities of the World Bank:

- >> Reducing poverty by promoting economic stability, growth, and employment.
- >> Improving access to social services and minimizing environmental risks.
- >> Improving governance and fighting corruption.

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AMCHAM GENERAL MEMBER MEETING

The AmCham General Member Meeting for 2008 was held on March 7. The majority of AmCham members and several partners and guests attended the meeting.

The two guests of honor at the meeting were U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, H.E. Michael D. Kirby and the Minister of Economy and Trade, Mr. Igor Dodon.

Many issues were discussed at the meeting and some amendments to AmCham's bylaws were voted on before the closing of the official portion of the meeting. Following the formal meeting was a reception where every one had the chance to socialize, meet new friends and business contacts.



INVEST IN MOLDOVA - INVEST IN THE REGION

Around 230 participants from 22 countries attended the Vienna Economic Forum - Chisinau Meeting which took place from February 20-21, 2008 in Chisinau, among them prominent representatives of the Members of Vienna Economic Forum, President Dr. Erhard Busek and Secretary General Dr. Elena Kirtcheva.

AmCham was invited and attended the forum and participated in general discussion and offered background information about our activities and members.

Most of the participants came from Moldova and Austria, but also from Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA and the United Kingdom.

The Vienna Economic Forum was founded in April 2004, with the aim to promote the economic cooperation between the countries from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from the Headquarters in Vienna. Founding Members of the Forum are some of the most reputable companies and entrepreneurs in Austria.

In 2007 the Millennium Challenge Corporation identified corruption and the lack of transparency as binding constraints to the economy of Moldova. Since then concrete steps have been taken to reduce corruption and increase transparency in the government and business community. The following two articles will delve deeper into how these two issues affect the business community and what the future holds in store for combating these impediments to economic growth.

TRANSPARENCY: THE ESSENCE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

Summary of Legal Framework of the Republic of Moldova on Access to Information and Public Meetings

Business Review February/March 2008

Under the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, any individual has the right to be informed about the facts, arguments and evidence that a public authority will consider in making a decision. Such information must be presented to an interested party in a clear and accessible form. Provision of information can only be denied if such information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with other laws; such refusal should be validated by a detailed justification, which can be subject to judiciary review or another form of independent control.

Public Authorities are obliged to give notice of existing procedures and inform interested parties that they have the right to be heard. Interested individuals must be informed, by appropriate means and in a timely manner, about procedures for implementing public policy and their right to give evidence and make arguments, that is, to be actively involved in the process. Likewise, administrative decisions must be brought to the notice of those interested within a reasonable timeframe and by appropriate means in order to be challenged, if necessary.

Any decision, which might affect or impair lawful rights or interests of a natural person, must be validated. The validation must be lawful, adequate, clear, and consistent. It must be either set forth or clearly referred to in the decision. The decision must also state an appeal procedure, specifying the nature of the appeal, appeal bodies and timeframe.

The Moldovan Constitution delegates to local public authorities the responsibility to enforce the private sectors right to access to information and transparency in government activity.

According to the Law on Local Public Administration, art.21, nr.123-XV, enacted March 18, 2003, "meetings of local councils are open". This law establishes the principle of transparency of local government activity. This presumption is subject to the Moldovan Law on Access to Information nr. 982-XIV enacted May 5, 2000. According to this law meetings can be declared closed to protect the following interests: 1) national defense or foreign policy; 2) trade secrets and confidential business secrets; 3) personal privacy; and 4) information that is exempt under other laws.

The basic rule is that at all local government meetings where decisions are taken, open access must be ensured for any interested parties. Any adopted decision which contravenes this rule, for example an unreasonably closed meeting, has no juridical power and can be brought to the administrative court in order to be revoked.

The private sector has the right not the obligation to participate in the decision making process. However, local governments are obliged to facilitate the private sectors public involvement, by providing notice of all meetings, including the agenda of meetings, and in appropriate cases through specific invitations.

The secretary of the local council must keep minutes of all local government meetings.

In summary, Moldova's existing legislation creates a broad regulatory framework that protects the private sector (a private individual and/or entity) to exercise their right to information and for interested private parties to participate in transparently conducted public governmental deliberations.

AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM FUNDED BY THE US GOVERNMENT HELPS MOLDOVA REDUCE CORRUPTION AND INCREASE TRANSPARENCY

In December 2006, Moldova and the United States signed the Threshold Country Program agreement that sets the framework for an ambitious two-year initiative for combating corruption and increasing transparency in Moldova's public sector. The Threshold Program is funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and administered by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The successful implementation of the Threshold Program will help Moldova qualify as a compact country, which entitles it to receive full Millennium Challenge Corporation assistance under a multi-year agreement between the Corporation and Moldova. Compact funding will allow Moldova to finance projects that may include road rehabilitation, investments to improve the efficiency of the energy sector, development of agriculture, and expansion of health services in rural areas.

The largest part of the Threshold Country Program is the Moldova Governance Threshold Country Program (MGTCP), which focuses on assisting the Government of Moldova in designing and implementing policy and administrative reforms that will promote good governance, reduce corruption and improve the quality of public services in the judicial, health and tax sectors. The MGTCP is implemented by the Millennium-IP3 Partners, a consortium of specialized firms from the United States with experience in the fields of democracy, governance, and economic reform.

In judicial administration, the MGTCP focuses on strengthening the capacity of the Moldovan

judiciary to prevent and combat corruption by improving transparency of, public access to, and operational efficiency of the courts. MGTCP is working with its national counterparts to implement systemic reforms in administration and in the legislative/regulatory environment governing the judiciary. At the local level, MGTCP is conducting a pilot court program to improve court administration. Examples of specific areas of assistance include providing physical, technological and operational improvements in the courts, developing a comprehensive code of judicial ethics, and providing a wide range of training activities.

Two project outcomes with a profound and immediate positive impact on transparency within the judiciary are case management software and the publication of the Supreme Court decisions. MGTCP has recently completed the development of functional standards for a case management software application that will provide a unified system of case-tracking across all categories of cases as well as the electronic random distribution of cases in the courts. This software will dramatically improve the public access to court information and documents. The software will first be implemented in four pilot courts (Chisinau Court of Appeal, and Rezina, Ungheni and Comrat district courts) and will then be rolled out to other courts in Moldova as time and resources permit. MGTCP is also working with the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court to create mechanisms to publish case decisions on web pages and to disseminate printed material about the court system. The project is revamping the Supreme Court's

website and enhancing its technical capacity so that most or all Supreme Court decisions can and will be published without delay on the Internet.

"In the aggregate, the range of assistance that the MGTCP provides will improve conditions in the courts, improve the efficiency and transparency of their operations, and enhance public awareness and access to the judicial system. By working with our partners to improve their work environment, procedures, transparency and attitudes within the judicial sector, I am confident that we are creating the necessary conditions for reducing corruption within the system", Laurence T. Vetter, the MGTCP Chief of Party.

In the health sector, MGTCP is assisting the Ministry of Health to reduce opportunities for corruption, increase the accountability of health care providers for the quality of services they deliver, better manage financial resources and procurement agents, and to improve the quality of clinical practice by Moldovan physicians. Specific program activities include developing new clinical protocols for the diagnosis and treatment of health problems that reflect international best practices in evidence based medicine, strengthening financial management and auditing, creating more transparent procurement procedures, developing a code of ethics for medical personnel, involving the public in setting health care priorities and budgets, and strengthening management skills throughout the health system.

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Legal Assistance

On February 14, 2008, the Parliament approved amendments to the **Law on the Bar**, stipulating that attorneys are entitled to provide legal assistance only on the basis of a written contract of legal assistance (mandate). The contract has to be registered at the Bar. The exception to the rule is representation of the interests of attorney's relatives. The law also establishes compulsory clauses to be included in the contract. The purpose of the amendment is to restrict cases of court representation on the basis of proxies.

Stock Exchange Market

On February 6, 2008, the Government approved regulations on the sale of state-owned securities on the Moldova Stock Exchange, providing that public property procured on the stock exchange must be paid within three days. The regulations stipulate the procedure of organizing the sale of public property securities, the rights and obligations of the buyers and sellers. It also stipulates the method of performing a deal and of holding auctions, the criteria for selecting brokerage companies and the terms during which the bought stock must be paid for.

Trade

On February 7, 2008, Speaker Marian Lupu decided that the bill on domestic trade needed to be revised.

The bill proposes a regulation framework for trade activities which are not covered by specific laws.

According to the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, the bill includes the main requirements and principles of domestic trade activities, outlines the role and duties of the central and local authorities in a given field, and describes the general rules governing trade in goods and services, adjusted to European Union standards. However, the opposition claimed that certain provisions contained in the bill are in conflict with the present laws, because, among others, they encourage excessive government control.

Tax Law

On February 14, the Parliament ratified the Moldova/UK Double Taxation Convention, with the purpose of developing economic relations between the two countries and the creation of tax systems which would coordinate the actions of the contracting states against double taxation, distribution of taxation rights between the contracting parties as well as the elimination of any form of tax discrimination.

Administrative Law

On February 15, 2008, the Parliament approved the **Law on the Conflict of Interests**, regulating the incompatibilities and restrictions applied to public officials and the resolution of conflicts of interest which can occur when an official has a personal interest related to the decision he has to make in his official position. While the Law establishes a clear direction for regulation, its provisions are too general and non-specific.

Social Insurance

On February 17, 2008, the Parliament approved the Law on the Amendment of article 9 of the Law on indemnities for temporary disablement and other social insurance allowances. The amendments differentiate the periods in which the indemnity for temporary disablement is paid, depending on the length of the individual employment contracts. The old version of the law provided that temporarily disabled employees, with fixed-term employment contracts, can receive indemnity for no longer than 30 days.

Arbitration law

In its meeting on February 22, 2008, the Parliament approved the Law on Arbitration, setting the regulations applied to the arbitration procedure of settling civil law litigations, as an alternative to the Civil Procedure in Court. The law focuses on the constitution, organisation and functioning of the arbitrage, which can either operate as a provisory (ad-hoc arbitration) or permanent body. The law allows the creation of general, special, internal and international arbitrages.

Free Economic Zones

On February 28, the Parliament approved amendments to the **Law on the Free Economic Zones (FEZ)**, providing for the extension of the authorized types of activity in these Zones. In particular, the law extends to 2 new activities – external trade and carriage. The normative act also eliminates the restrictions on the export of the goods produced in the zone from the FEZ to the rest of Moldova's customs territory. One of the amendments consists in the specific definition of transit activities. The amendments were designed to eliminate the lack of the legislation and help the development of the activity of the FEZ residents.

Agriculture

On February 29, the legislative body approved the **Law on the Protection of Plant Varieties** establishing the legal framework for the regulation of the relations which appear in the process of creation, legal protection and utilization of varieties of plants belonging to all families and species. The law also establishes the normative system on the regulation of organisation and functioning of the plant varieties protection mechanism.

Intellectual Property

On February 29, 2008, the Parliament approved the **Law on Protection of Brands** that regulates the process of certification, legal protection and use of brands, creating this way the framework needed to enforce community regulations in the area and providing wide and detailed normative cover for the relations in the sphere.

On March 7, 2008, the Parliament approved the **Law on Protection of Inventions**. The purpose of the law is to create the legal framework for the implementation of the international treaties in the domain, as well as to adjust the national legislation to international provisions. In particular, it establishes the rights and obligations which result from the creation, legal protection and exploitation of inventions, the conditions for brevet issuance, and the procedure of brevet request. The law also establishes the competences of the State Agency for Intellectual Property, as well as stipulates the categories of inventions subjected to brevet protection.

On March 27, 2008, the legislative body approved the **Law on Protection of Geographical Indications, Designations of Origin and Traditional Guaranteed Specialties**, aiming to adjust the national regulations in the domain to European standards. The new law provides detailed regulation in the field, compared to the previous general regulations contained in the Law on Trademarks and Appellations of Origin. The purpose of the law is to contribute to the diversification of agricultural products as well as enhance rural economy. A novelty for the national legislation is the protection of traditional specialties guaranteed – traditional agricultural products or foodstuffs having inherent characteristics which distinguish them clearly from similar products or foodstuffs. A separate chapter is dedicated to the international registration of designations of origin.

Public Procurement

On March 6, 2008, the Parliament applied an amendment to the **Law on Public Procurement**, according to which the provisions of the law will not be applied to the contracts on printing banknotes and issuance of metallic coins, as well as their transportation.

Execution Law

On March 6, 2008, the Legislature approved a series of amendments to the Execution Code. The modifications aim to establish expressly the right of the court executor to apply the restriction to leave the country for the debtors under certain circumstances and for certain terms. The legislation now provides the possibility to apply this restriction in case of the emigration of a person who has unpaid debts for the state, natural or legal entities. However, the amended law sets an additional restriction to the constitutional right to free circulation of the person, in favor of the creditors' rights to have their claims protected.

On March 7, 2008, the **Law on Tobacco and Tobacco Products** came into force. The new law bans smoking in a range of public places, some of them being public institutions and neighboring areas, in agricultural and industrial markets, playing yards and cafes for children, in underground passages, lifts, bus stations, airports, railway stations, in leisure and resting areas, except for the places, especially destined to smoke, bars, restaurants, discos and similar locales, which must have specially designed rooms for smokers and non-smokers, compulsorily marked as "Smoking area" and "Non-smoking area". The law also prohibits any advertising for tobacco products on TV, radio, in the written media and cinemas. It is forbidden to stimulate the marketing of tobacco products through sponsorships.

Central Public Authorities

On March 7, 2008, the Parliament approved the **Law on the amendment of art 24 of the Law on Government**. Under this document, the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure is to be dissolved and its competencies transmitted to the Ministry of Economy and Commerce. The Parliament's decision is motivated on the necessity to improve the mechanism of policy making and implementation of strategies as well as avoid the conflict of competence in the domain.

Business

On March 14, the **law on the principles regulating entrepreneurship** came into force. Among other provisions, the law refers to the types of licensed entrepreneurial activity, the documents necessary to obtain it and the amounts paid off by companies.

It clearly establishes the difference between the notions of "authorization" and "license". Authorizations and permits shall be issued within a shorter term, including through the internet.

The Government has repeatedly maintained that state agencies shall not take money for issuing authorizations, certificates and endorsements and shall not enhance the pressure upon economic entities, for example the Ministry of Economy and Commerce will issue free authorizations on the quotas on exporting goods to the European Union on the basis of the Autonomous Trade Preferences.

Communication Technologies

On March 17, 2009 the **Electronic Communications Law** came into force. The purpose of the law is to adjust the national legislation to European standards in the field and thus, even the terminology was changed (the old document was entitled the Telecommunications law).

The new law establishes simple procedures for launching a business on the electronic communications market. Under the old law, companies willing to provide services in this domain were issued a license for a period of five years. The new law provides that it is sufficient that the applicants should address the National Agency for the Regulation of Telecommunications and Informatics which is to register them within a 7-day period and there exists no time limit on their activities.

The law contains special regulations on Universal Service, establishing a minimum package of services to be provided to the population at accessible prices, regardless of the geographical area. Moreover, the Law provides for the creation of a Universal Service Fund, from which the operators' losses from the ensuring of the minimum package will be compensated.

Labor Law

On March 21, 2007, the Parliament ap-

proved a series of amendments to the **Labor Code**, designed to adjust its norms to changes that occur in Moldova's economy as well as to other legislative norms. The legislature established a minimal term of the Collective Employment Contract – 1 year.

Another change is the exclusion of article 59, providing the possibility for the employer to place the employee under a preliminary period to assess his skills and capabilities for the job before signing an employment contract. Therefore, the law currently regulates only one form of professional assessment of the employee – the trial period. The amended law stipulates that "A parent, regardless of sex, who has 2 or more children aged under 14 (or one invalid child aged under 16) can be granted an unpaid holiday of at least 14 days per year." The old version of the law provided this right only for women.

Finance

On March 23, 2008, the Parliament examined the **Law on currency regulation**. The law defines the essential notions in the domain of currency regulations and establishes the basic requirements related to performing currency transactions.

The authors of the bill say that the law establishes more liberal rules for performing currency operations and its implementation will not imply additional costs for residents and non-residents. Still, the liberalization will refer only to the long-term operations, while the short-term operations will go on being regulated by the Central Bank.

Company Law

On March 27, the Parliament approved amendments to the Insolvency Law. Under the new provisions, the administrator of the insolvency must coordinate his actions with the creditors' general assembly or the creditors' committee, in case of liquidating or capitalizing the company's assets or selling the enterprise as a single patrimonial complex.

Therefore the legislature sets a new guarantee regarding the independence and impartiality of the insolvency's administrator and avoids the conflict of interests that may appear, thus protecting the rights and interests of the creditors and the debtor.

For more information visit www.parliament.md

Continuation of article on page 12

In the area of tax administration, the MGTCP focuses on facilitating the improvement of the State Tax Inspectorate's (STI) operational efficiency and transparency and taxpayer's service perspective of the STI. Specific MGTCP activities include creating the Single Information and Customer Service Center (the Call Center); enhancing existing IT databases and management information systems at the State Tax Inspectorate to improve the efficiency of collection and auditing; and enhancing the skills of the tax inspectors to communicate with the public.

The common goal that links these components together is that of incorporating democratic and transparent structures and principles into Moldovan governance -- systems that will be responsive to citizens as the end users or “customers” of government. The business community, as one of these customers, should be actively involved in the reform process by demanding transparency and honesty when dealing with the government institutions.

[illegible]

Moldovan Government Liquidates the State Owned International Road Traffic Agency of Moldova

The Government has decided to liquidate the state enterprise *International Road Traffic Agency of Moldova*, all of its former functions will be taken over by the Customs Service.

The agency exchanges permits for motor vehicle circulation inside the territory of Moldova with over 40 countries of the world.

Foreign Direct investment in the National economy increased by 44.7% in 2007

Foreign Direct Investment in the Moldovan economy totaled 532.7 million USD in 2007, an increase of 44.7% compared with 2006, according to data released by the Ministry of Economy and Trade.

From 2001-2005 the volume of investments in the banking sector increased gradually from 6.3 million USD to 11.9 million USD. In 2006, these investments made up 40.3 million USD, and grew to approximately 56 million USD in 2007.

[illegible]

Remittances from Abroad Exceeded 85 million USD in One Month

In January 2008 Moldovan citizens working abroad transferred more than 85 million USD back to Moldova through commercial banks, which was an increase of over 40% from the same period in 2007.

According to data from the National Bank of Moldova, over 70% of the foreign exchange transfers (60.28 million USD) were done through the rapid transfer systems.

The volume of remittances soared to an all time high of 1.2 billion USD in 2007, which was an increase of 42% from 2006.

In 2007 the remittances accounted for over 36% of Moldova's GDP, placing a top the World Bank global rankings for remittances as a percent of GDP.

IMF Executive Board Approved 18.6 million USD disbursement for Moldova

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund decided to release an amount of 18.6 million USD for Moldova. According to the press release on the IMF webpage, the disbursement is provided under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility arrangement approved in May 2006.

Considering the last disbursement the total disbursements to Moldova under this arrangement amounts to 124.7 million USD.

Bulgarian Premier Calls on the Bulgarian Business Community to invest in Moldova

Bulgarian Premier Sergey Stanishev called on Bulgarian business community to invest in the Moldovan economy, taking into consideration the attractive investment climate in Moldova.

"Now is the moment to place massively Bulgarian investments in Moldova, given the very good conditions for business development, and it should not be missed", stated Bulgarian Premier at the Moldovan-Bulgarian Business Forum held in Chisinau on Friday, February 15.

Premier Vasile Tarlev Resigns

Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev submitted his official resignation on Wednesday, on March, 19, 2008.

Vasile Tarlev expressed his satisfaction with the results the Government has attained so far, which, according to him, have been appreciated by many international structures.

According to Mr. Tarlev, within the period he headed the Government, a range of the Government's representatives have been trained, so that now they are ready to function as members of any Government. "I am ready to offer assistance to any representative of the Government," Tarlev said.

Vasile Tarlev was appointed as Premier in 2001 and is the Prime Minister who has been in office longer than anyone, after the proclamation of independence.

Appointment of a New Government in the Republic of Moldova

After the resignation of Mr. Tarlev from his position as Prime Minister the Parliament had two weeks to appoint a new Prime Minister and a new Government. The newly formed Government was recently announced and while it is still too early to assess the impact of their tenure, many questions have been raised about what is in store for the 2009 Presidential elections in Moldova and what the new Government will do in the run-up to the election.

The Newly Appointed Government of the Republic of Moldova

Prime Minister- Zinaida Greceanii

Prime Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Commerce- Igor Dodon

Vice Prime Minister- Victor Stepaniuc

Vice Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs and European Integration- Andrei Stratan

Minister of Finance- Mariana Durlusteanu

Minister of Food and Agriculture- Anatolie Gorodenco

Minister of Transport and Roads- Vasile Ursu

Minister of Construction and Territorial Development- Vladimir Baldovici

Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources- Violeta Ivanov

Minister of Education and Youth- Larisa Savga

Minister of Health- Larisa Catrinici

Minister of Social Protection, Protection of Children and Families- Galina Balmos

Minister of Culture- Artur Cozma

Minister of Justice- Vitalie Pirlog

Minister of Internal Affairs- Valentin Mejjinschi

Minister of Defense- Vitalie Vrabie

Minister of Information Development- Pavel Buceatchi

Minister of Reintegration- Vasile Sova

Minister of the Local Public Administration- Valentin Guznac

The Governor of UTA Gagauzia - Mihail Formuzal (from the office)

The President of the Academy of Science - Gheorghe Duca (from the office)

P.A.A. SRL



About us

P.A.A. SRL was created on March 16, 2004, as the result of the division of the accounting department and a part of the legal department of KPMG Moldova. At its foundation, P.A.A. SRL was created based on auditing companies' needs for international accounting standards.

The experience and the ability to work professionally and effectively with international organizations, state agencies and departments, allows P.A.A. SRL to be very competitive in the local market and to use its experience for the benefit of its clients.

Our team

Our team is composed of 8 people made up of certificate lawyers, tax consultants, and accountants who are always ready to help the client and offer a wide array of services.

Our Qualifications

Our staff has accumulated a great deal of experience not only with local companies, but also with international companies, we have the necessary knowledge for solving many difficult problems that can arise in the course of business and we perform a variety of professional services and activities.

We have a lot experience working with clients in the following fields of business:

- Domestic and international banks;
- Local and international companies;
- Different programs and interna-

tional projects.

We are not permitted to provide additional information about clients due to confidentiality.

Our services

P.A.A SRL offers a large array of services, which is one reason that we can help local and international companies maintain a good presence in the local market.

Despite all of the services that we offer our clients, we face tough competition from competitors in our industry. That's why we take each client very seriously and we strive to understand each of our clients' businesses in order to provide them with assistance should any unforeseen problems or risks manifest themselves in the course of doing business. In this way we feel that we differentiate our company from other companies in the local market.

Tax Consulting

P.A.A. SRL offers its clients the following tax services:

- Tax calculation and consultancy in local tax legislation;
- Tax audit services;
- Identification of the optimal models of making transactions according to the tax legislation.
- The adjustment of commercial contracts on a monthly basis, taking into consideration the most recent fiscal legislation.
- Tax planning

Legal Services

P.A.A. SRL offers its clients the following legal services:

- Advice about the company's economic and financial activities.
- Notifying clients on changes in legislation.
- Creating commercial contracts and other legal documents.
- Legal investigation.
- Registration, reorganization, liquidation of companies, help obtaining the necessary licenses and certificates.
- Legal representation for companies that have the full legal services package.
- Representing the interests of the client before the court and other state authorities.

Accounting services

P.A.A. SRL offers its clients the following accounting services:

- Implementing new systems of accounting. Offering services concerning accounting evidence and presentation of full sets of reports to public authorities.
- Reestablishment of accounting evidence.
- Calculation of salaries and bonuses.
- Consultancy in accounting.
- Elaboration and implementation of accounting policies according to legislative norms, tailored to each client.
- Elaboration of income tax declarations.
- Consultancies concerning income taxes.
- Representing and promoting clients' interests before state authorities and fiscal authorities.

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JOINT PUBLICATION WITH MOLDOVAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

AmCham and the Moldovan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) worked together to produce a four page article about AmCham Moldova, which was published in the March edition of MCCI's monthly publication *Info Pro-Business*.

The article was an introduc-

tion to AmCham Moldova, our members, advocacy activities, current projects, and events that were organized in 2007.

The article also touched on the AmCham plan of activities for 2008 and the activities that we realized in the domain of Corporate Social Responsibility

in the previous year as well as this year.



AMCHAM PARTNERSHIP WITH AIESEC



AmCham and AIESEC officially became partners on February 22 with the signing of a one-year partnership agreement.

AIESEC is the largest youth organization in the world. It is led by students and recent graduates who have the goal of developing and discovering their potential in order to have a positive impact on society.

AIESEC has close to 60 years of experience working with the private business sector and higher education systems from all corners of the globe. AIESEC Moldova has been operating for approximately two and a half years, during which it has organized several successful projects such as: Next Step, Career Days, Start Smart, Training Center, and Moldova Next Station. Currently AIESEC Moldova has more than 100 members and through its activities it strives to make positive changes

in the areas of education and entrepreneurship in Moldova. Each student participating in the courses receives training in the areas of coordination, planning and strategy, goal setting, leadership, communication, marketing, etc.

AIESEC Moldova has the unique opportunity to work directly with university students to help them develop and sharpen their business skills through a programs and seminars, which make up a total of five components collectively known as the "AIESEC Experience". AIESEC Moldova has already planned a total of 17 seminars and activities for 2008 which will take place throughout Moldova.

AIESEC Moldova is a widely respected and well-known organization among businesses in Moldova. Several AmCham members are currently sponsors of the AIESEC program in

Moldova.

AmCham decided to partner with AIESEC because we believe that Human Resources and Education are two vital areas in which Moldova could benefit from more development, and working with AIESEC and participating in joint training programs and seminars will provide AmCham and our members with the unique opportunity to be directly involved with the development of tomorrow's work force.

The President of AIESEC Moldova, Mr. Sergiu Matei, is a graduate of the program.

AIESEC Moldova:

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day has been observed since in the early 1900's. Today March 8th an official holiday in Moldova.

The tradition sees men honoring their mothers, wives, girlfriends, colleagues, etc with flowers and small gifts. In some countries March 8 is the equivalent status of Mother's Day where children

give small presents to their mothers and grandmothers.

Annually on 8 March, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate their achievements. While there are many large-scale initiatives, a rich and diverse fabric of local activity connects women from all around the world rang-

ing from political rallies, business conferences, government activities and networking events through to local women's craft markets, theatric performances, fashion parades and more.

We would like to wish all of the women in our membership a very happy March 8th holiday.

LEAP YEAR

2008 is a leap year, which means that it has 366 days instead of the usual 365 days that an ordinary year has. An extra day is added in a leap year—February 29—which is called an intercalary day or a leap day.

The Egyptians were the first to come up with the idea of adding a leap day once every four years to keep the calendar in sync with the solar year. Later, the Romans adopted this solution for their calendar, and they became the first to designate February 29 as the leap day.

The small town of Anthony New Mexico has a claim to fame, albeit, one it benefits from every four years. The reason for the claim to fame: Anthony is the Leap Year Capital of the World. In 1988 the Anthony, Texas/New Mexico Chamber of Commerce voted to sponsor the "Worldwide Leap

Year Festival" and the "Worldwide Leap Year Birthday Club."

Since no other place on Earth is known to regularly commemorate Leap Year, the Chamber claimed the title and the governors of New Mexico and Texas at that time issued proclamations naming Anthony, New Mexico the Leap Year Capital of the World. Furthermore, Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico entered a request into the Congressional Record of the United States that Congress and the President join in the proclamation.

The festival has grown each four years from 9 people celebrating their leap year birthdays in 1988 to more than 200 in 2003, including members born on every Leap Year Day in the 1900s (there have been 23.) The members hail from almost every state in the United States, and even

come from Germany, England, Norway, Mexico and Canada.

This Leap Year the Anthony Chamber of Commerce, assisted by local business and civic organizations provided a variety of events for all including a golf tournament, a trip to the casino in a neighboring town, a large birthday breakfast, a press conference, and a parade for couples that celebrate their anniversaries on February 29. Mr. Art Franco, the Mayor of Anthony, Texas, volunteered to be Chairman for the 2008 celebration.



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

St. Patrick is believed to have driven the snakes from Ireland. Once a pagan himself, St. Patrick is one of Christianity's most widely known figures.

The modern secular holiday is based on the original Christian saint's feast day also thought to be the date of the saint's death. In 1737, Irish immigrants to the United States began observing the holiday publicly in Boston and held the first St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City in 1766.

Today, the tradition continues with people from all walks and heritages by wearing green, eating Irish food, and attending parades. St. Patrick's Day is bursting with folklore; from the shamrock to the leprechaun and to pinching those that are not wearing green



FEBRUARY - BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black history cannot be separated from American history as a whole, from 13 colonies to the American civil war through the civil rights campaign and beyond. But it was Carter Woodson who essentially revolutionized the idea, countering what he saw as the prevailing scholarly neglect or misrepresentation of his people. He established the second week of February 1926 as the first annual Negro History Week and fifty years later it expanded into a month long commemoration.

The Negro History Week Movement took hold immediately. At first it was celebrated almost exclusively by African Americans, taking place outside of the view of the wider society. Increasingly, however, mayors and governors, especially in the North, began endorsing Negro History Week and promoting interracial harmony. By the time of Woodson's death in 1950, Negro History

Week had become a well-established cultural institution. Indeed, it was so established that Woodson had begun to criticize groups for shallow and often inaccurate presentations that did not advance the public's knowledge of Negro life and history.

History books had barely begun covering black history when the tradition of Black History Month was started. At that point, most representation of blacks in history books was only in reference to the low social position they held, with the exception of George Washington Carver. Part of the aim of Black History Month is to underline the harms

of racial prejudice and to cultivate black self-esteem following centuries of socio-economic oppression. It is also an opportunity to further recognize significant contributions to society made by people with African heritage.

Today Black History Month is celebrated all across America. Throughout the month of February community groups put on plays about important African Americans in American History, school children prepare reports and read books about the contributions of African Americans, and movies and special documentaries are aired t on national television networks and radio.

"Some African Americans who have made a large impact on America and World History are African Americans who have challenged humankind to live their best life possible knowing that we are all interconnected. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one such man. He challenged the masses to be freed from the ignorance of racism. Through nonviolent protest and sit-ins, he helped America to evolve into a more tolerant country."

Marlena Hawkins, African American, United States Peace Corps Volunteer

THE YEAR OF YOUTH IN MOLDOVA

It has become a kind tradition in the Republic of Moldova to dedicate each year to a particular direction of social policy. This year was no exception, and President Vladimir Voronin announced at a recent meeting that 2008 would be the Year of Youth in Moldova.

The participants of the meeting discussed, in particular, the national program for supporting the economic rights provided to the youth, which should stimulate the private initiative and put to an end mass migration. The program aims to provide Moldovan youth with financial and technical assistance for setting up private businesses.

During the discussions about employment of young specialists, Mr. Voronin insisted that an investigation be launched into how wages could be increased for young specialists outside of Chisinau, especially those in rural areas.

Many young people believe that the Year of Youth will assure more efficient coordination of the youth inter-sector policy, including the Ministries and Ministers directly involved in the process of policy making and programs which will take youth perspectives and necessities into consideration.

Happy Easter!



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