

“I Have the Right to Know My Rights” Course: Curriculum and Learning Materials

*Name of organization:*  
Amnesty International – Moldova

## **CATALOGUE OF THE SUBJECT CURRICULUM “I HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW MY RIGHTS”**

### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – MOLDOVA**

#### **MODULE I. WHAT HUMAN RIGHTS REPRESENT**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

**THIS IS ME – THE HUMAN BEING.**

**HUMAN DIGNITY – THE INDISPENSABLE PROPERTY OF EVERY PERSON.**

**HUMAN RIGHTS FROM THE PAST UP TILL THE PRESENT.**

**WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?**

**HUMAN RIGHTS CALENDAR.**

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD.**

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOLDOVA.**

**SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION.**

#### **MODULE II: CHILD’S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS**

**HUMAN RIGHTS START WITH CHILD’S RIGHTS.**

**WE STUDY THE CONVENTION OF OUR RIGHTS.**

**I HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIFE AND A DECENT LIVING.**

**I HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.**

**I HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND TO PARTICIPATE.**

**I ENSURE MY FUTURE THROUGH THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION.**

**OBLIGATIONS OR RESPONSIBILITIES?**

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY RIGHTS?**

**SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION.**

#### **MODULE III. DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE**

##### **HUMAN DIVERSITY**

**DIFFERENT, BUT EQUAL IN RIGHTS.**

**TOLERANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS.**

**LEARN TO BE TOLERANT.**

**DISCRIMINATION. SERIOUS FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION.**

**SAY “NO” TO DISCRIMINATION.**

**CLASHING RIGHTS.**

**SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION.**

## MODULE IV: ACT TOGETHER TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

WE STAND FOR ABOLISHMENT OF THE DEATH PENALTY.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS.

SUCCESSFUL CASES IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND MASS MEDIA.

HERE AND NOW – WHAT CAN WE DO?

THE POWER OF ACTING TOGETHER.

SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION

FINAL EVALUATION AND SELF EVALUATION.

### FRAMEWORK OBJECTIVES

1. DETERMINATION OF ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS.
2. FORMATION OF A CIVIC BEHAVIOUR THROUGH EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
3. MOTIVATION FOR INVOLVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTING ACTIONS.

The course “I Have the Right to Know my Rights” is intended to be used as didactic and informational material for extracurricular activities, an optional course or a learning circle for pupils of gymnasium level (7-8 form). At the same time, we hope that in the next years this course will be a compulsory one, when the textbooks will be edited and the necessary number of teachers will be trained/ prepared for teaching this course.

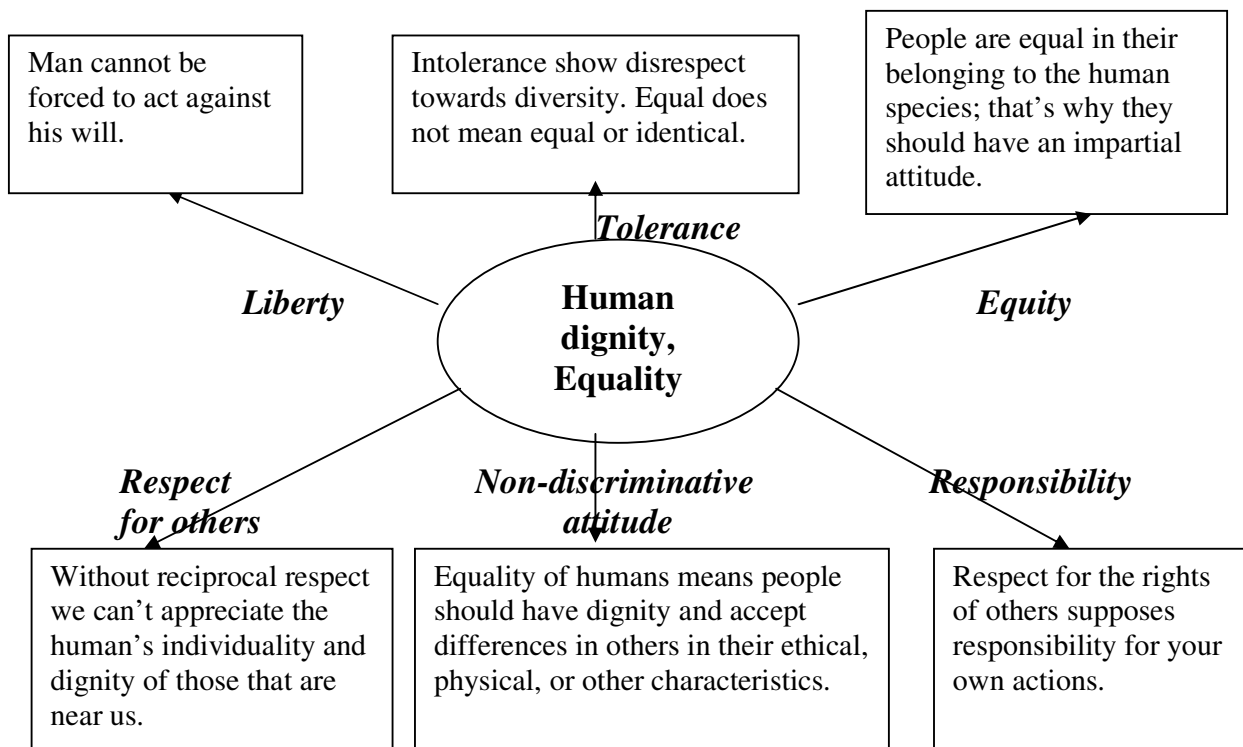
### Theme 3: HUMAN DIGNITY - AN INDISPENSABLE PROPERTY OF EACH HUMAN BEING

*Motto: Realize that you are a human being and always remember this. (Philemon)*

The content of this theme brings us to the idea, that human rights are based on values that have their origin in the oldest philosophies and religions. But, in the top of the pyramid there are two key values: human dignity and equality. Human rights include those compulsory components, which provide for the human beings a decent life. The equality, as an essential value of human rights, excludes the discrimination in this respect.

The human being himself or herself, in the essence, is a value. Once he or she is born he or she receives rights, such as the right to live and the property of **human dignity**. This is the characteristic feature of all human beings, no matter if he or she is a state leader or a simple citizen, a human who respects the law or a criminal. Human dignity is inalienable. Also each human being is equal in his dignity with others, which means that everyone has equal possibilities and he or she deserves to be treated well and with trust, no matter of his or her characteristic features. Each of us should respect the dignity and the equality of every other human being.

Human dignity and the equality of all humans are human values and in the same time two basic principles that are at the base of the concept of human rights. They could be spread in a wide specter of values that determine the coexistence of people in society:



Respecting these values in daily life offers us safety and the feeling of belonging to the great human family. Their persistence in time allows humans and the society in general to become multilaterally developed.



## Competence Laboratory



### Get informed

1. Study the Preamble, Art. 1 and Art. 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and identify the human values that are at the basis of this declaration.



### Interpret

2. Try to explain the notions “human dignity” and “equality” in your own words.
3. Comment on the quote: “*Dignity is at the foundation of the human essences; to refuse your own freedom means to step on your human dignity, your own rights, even obligations. Such denials are incompatible with human nature.*” (J.J.Rousseau)



### Accomplish

4. Enumerate the main derivative of the two key values of human rights.



### Analyze

5. Analyze the facts that are at the foundation of the concept of human rights, in the opinion of the 17th Century English politician Richard Overton: “*... It is typical for every being that its life is not subdued to foreign intervention, because everybody is a personality with specific features, with its property and every attack of this “I,” is an act of violence, an insult brought to nature. The law of correct relations between humans is unique: no one is above my rights and liberties, and I am not above others’ rights, because people are equal in their dignity and property, liberty and independence are equivalent for all.*”



### Appreciate

6. Appreciate the importance of respect to human rights in your life, by the essence of human dignity.

## Theme 10: WE STUDY THE CONVENTION OF OUR RIGHTS

*Motto: We are not only the future...*

*We are the present!*

*(From the declaration of children and youth from Europe and Central Asia at the Special Session Regarding the Rights of Children, Budapest, 2001)*

Children have fundamental liberties and rights inherent to any human being. This is the fundamental principle of the Convention on Children's Rights — an international treaty in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The given document is made out of 54 articles, each of them containing a description of a right of children. The Convention defines every human being less than 18 years of age as being a child, except for the cases when the laws of the country mark adulthood under this age.

The Convention ensures the right for survival, health and education, for a protected family environment, for game and cultural identity, for protection against exploitation and any form of abuse. It ensures that the opinion of every child is taken into consideration in the matters that regard him or her.

The International Convention regarding Children's Rights was adopted on the 20th of November 1989 in New York by the General Assembly of the United Nations and has entered into force the 20th of December 1990. The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova has ratified the Convention regarding Rights of Children on the 12th of December 1990 and this International Document has entered into force in our country since the 20th of February 1993. By ratifying the Convention, the Republic of Moldova has engaged itself into protecting children from any sort of discrimination, to insure social security for them and conditions for intellectual and physical development.

Up until now, all the countries of the world, except two (the U.S.A. and Somalia), have agreed to accept the standards imposed by this important treaty, that emphasize the care and protection of every child as a priority for everyone, and especially for the government of the states. The states that have ratified the convention have the responsibility of assuring the obedience of the rights of children. Their progress is monitored by the United Nations Committee for the rights of the child.

The convention has established new international ethical principles and norms of behavior with the children. All the rights included in the Convention regarding the Rights of the Children may be conditionally divided into 4 categories:

- I. Rights for survival – include the right to life and the fulfillment of fundamental needs that assure the existence of the child. Among these there are: the right to a decent level of life, the right to a shelter, to food, and medical aid.
- II. Rights for development – the rights that assure the children a full and multilateral development as human beings. For example: the right to education, rest, cultural manifestations, access to information and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- III. Rights to protection – assures the security of children against the harmful factors in their life: various forms of violence, harm, physical or mental abuse, abandonment,

negligence bad treatment or exploitation. These rights regard such problems as the protection of refugee children, children that work, or those in human traffic.

- IV. Right to participate – are the rights that demonstrate the important role of children in the community and the life of the entire people. They are the liberty to express one's opinion, peaceful association and reunion, the right of being listened to and heard when problems that regard children are debated.

Although there other international treaties and agreements regarding the rights of children, the Convention regarding the Rights of Children is unique because:

- ✓ It's all inclusive – ensures the children their civil, political, economical, Social, and cultural rights;
- ✓ It's universal – applies for all the children in all situation all over the world;
- ✓ It's unconditional – calling for all financially poor governments to take measures for the protection of the rights of children;
- ✓ It's explicit – firmly establishes that all rights are essential, indivisible, and interdependent, ensured for all in an equal manner.



## *Competence Laboratory*



### Get informed

1. Define the Convention on the rights of the Child.



### Interpret

2. Describe the characteristic features of the convention in four to five sentences.
3. Explain why it is important for the children to know their rights.



### Accomplish

4. Extract all the rights included in the Convention regarding the Rights of the Child and divide them in the four conditioned categories.



### Analyze

5. Compare the categories of rights included and identify the essential differences between them.



### Appreciate

6. Argue which rights you consider most important? Why?



## Theme 15: OBLIGATIONS OR RESPONSIBILITIES?

*Motto: All of us and I personally are responsible for everything and all of us.  
(F. Dostoevsky)*

“Every right is accompanied by an obligation!” and “In order to benefit from your rights you have to fulfill your obligations!” are statements that you have heard often, but on which you probably have rarely reflected from a critical point of view. It’s good to ask yourself as many questions as possible. For example:

- Am I obliged to do something to benefit from a right?
- Who do I have obligations to or who has obligations to me?
- Obligations or responsibilities?

For a correct perception of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it’s good to talk about the rights-responsibilities correlation. What’s the difference?!

To be obliged, means, according to the DEX to force to do something, to be imposed to perform a task,” thus someone from the outside controls my actions. For example: “I am obliged to come to school at 8:00 in order not to be punished by form-master.”

To be responsible means to show a conscientious attitude, to have an internal control factor: “I’m obliged to myself.” Same example: “I’m responsible for my future, that’s why I come to school on time, in order not to miss the knowledge and skills necessary for the accomplishment of this future.”

Thus no one can “administer” human rights depending on his obedience to his obligations to the society or the state. Yet, the liberty of every person is limited by the liberty of the person next to him or her and the necessity to coexist in a society. This coexistence is possible if everyone assumes responsibility for respecting human rights. If I have the right to freely express myself, I am responsible to speak the truth and not saying things that will hurt the dignity of another.

Responsibility is something voluntary. Every man decides on what volume of responsibilities he can assume and what rights he can benefit from. If I want my rights to be respected, I will not be indifferent to the things that happen in the community and the country, I have an active civic position and therefore I have more responsibilities. Thus, by defending my rights I also help others in this noble mission. I have rights and freedoms because I am Human! My rights result from my human dignity and no one can deprive me of them, independently of how responsible I am.

If everybody has responsibilities, then who has obligations and which are they? Every citizen has obligations to the state that are established by laws. The obligations are rules of social behaviour by which the state ensures the coexistence of people in society. The fundamental obligations of the citizen in every state are:

- The defense of the Motherland.
- Paying taxes and duties.
- Respecting the law and court decisions.
- Respecting human rights.
- Protecting the environment and national patrimony.

If I will not honour my obligations, the state has the right to punish me but it does not have the right to deprive me of human rights or deprive me of my human dignity. Human rights are inalienable.

The essence of freedom, justice, and peace in the world consists in recognizing the dignity of all the members of society and respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



### ***Competence Laboratory***



#### ***Get informed***

1. Define the notions obligation and responsibility. What's the difference?
2. Study the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and identify the obligations of citizens.



#### ***Interpret***

3. Select three rights that you consider especially important from the Convention. Explain why?
4. Identify the responsibilities result from these rights. Was it difficult to decide on the responsibilities? Why?



#### ***Accomplish***

5. Collect quotes of personalities from the field of human rights that support the interdependency between rights and responsibilities.



#### ***Analyze***

6. Argue why is it important for us to be responsible in exerting our rights?



#### ***Appreciate***

7. Appreciate what is most important for society — respecting rights or obligations?
8. Study the fragment of Universal Declaration of Obligations that was proposed by the Interaction Council international organization but which wasn't enacted by the UNO. Express your opinion on this. Is an international document in which all the obligations of the people could be written, necessary?

### ***Chapter I Fundamental Principles for Humanity***

**Article 1** - Every person, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, social status, political opinion, language, age, nationality, or religion, has a responsibility to treat all people in a humane way.

**Article 2** - No person should lend support to any form of inhumane behaviour, but all people have a responsibility to strive for supporting the dignity and self-esteem of all others.

**Article 3** - No person, group or organization, state, army, or police stands above good and evil; all are subject to ethical standards. Everyone has a responsibility to promote good and to avoid evil in all things.

*Article 4 - All people, endowed with reason and conscience, must accept a responsibility to each and all, to families and communities, to races, nations, and religions in a spirit of solidarity: What you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not do to others.*



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## Theme 21: **DISCRIMINATION. SERIOUS FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION**

*Motto: Civilization should be judged depending on the treatment it gives to minorities. (Mahatma Gandhi)*

Have you ever been in a group that's new for you, where everybody is avoiding you, for the simple reason that you're too little known to the others? The situation is unpleasant, but repairable, because there is the hope that once you'll get to know them better, everything will change. And now imagine yourself being ignored, avoided, excluded from the game not because you're too little known to the others but because you are different from them through the color of your skin, form of the eyes, gender, confession, etc.

Such a treatment is called **discrimination**. There is no generic definition of discrimination, but in different international documents its meaning is defined as any restriction, exclusion or ignorance of a person or a group of people from racial, ethnic, confessional, gender, or other reasons. By promoting a preferential behavior, discrimination actually breaks one of the basic principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — the equality in rights of all people.

The forms of discrimination are various, the most often being:

**Sexism** – a form of behavior that excludes women from full participation in the life of the state and society based on the aberrant idea that the woman would be inferior to the man.

**Racism** – promotes the idea of the superiority of a nation to another and denies human based on rights on racial criteria;

**Xenophobia** – fear of people foreign to a community, based on the stereotype that the newcomers are a threat to the locals;

**Chauvinism** – a behavior coming from the belief that a nation is superior to other nations and has the right to use privileges;

**Religious Fanaticism** – the forced introduction of some religions and favoring the followers of these religions.

**Anti-Semitism** – impartial treatment applied to Jews that is frequently manifested through marginalization, persecutions, and atrocities.

Whatever the way to express discrimination, it means the depriving of some people of the possibility to exercise their rights; it means a flagrant violation of human rights in general.



## *Competence Laboratory*



### *Get informed*

1. Read the text attentively and extract the main manifestations of discrimination out of it.



### *Interpret*

2. Find, with the help of the text, the preconceived ideas on the basis of which there is:
  - a) racism;
  - b) sexism;
  - c) anti-Semitism;
  - d) xenophobia.



### *Accomplish*

3. Together with your desk mate, elaborate a regulation which would make the exclusion of discrimination possible.



### *Analyze*

4. Analyze the behaviour of colleagues in the breaks between classes. What stops them from being tolerant in the interpersonal relations?
5. Propose solutions for the accepting of a tolerant behaviour.



### *Appreciate*

6. Appreciate which manifestations of discrimination are most frequent in your community. What are the causes?

## Theme 22: SAY "NO" TO DISCRIMINATION

*Motto: Humanity is the first of virtues.  
(Vauvenargues, Refi., 441)*

If you have studied the previous topics attentively you have learned that discrimination is a global problem, the manifestations of which appear in different places of the world, and the discriminative treatment affecting millions from various social groups. It's thus very important for each person on the planet to be an active militant against any form of discrimination, and for the equality in rights of all human beings indifferent of their race, nationality, gender, religious beliefs, etc.

Maybe you're thinking that you're too little and your forces are insignificant for the solution of this global problem? We will demonstrate you in the following lines that to end discrimination it is necessary for every member of the society to take an active position towards this problem.

We would like to propose you start with a self evaluation. Ask yourself if you don't have preconceived ideas regarding some coinhabitant ethnicities. What should you do in order to have an impartial opinion about each person, treat every person with respect, appreciate him or her by his or her deeds and not by what others think about him or her.

Read as much as you can about the coinhabiting ethnicities; get informed on the culture and history of this people, the representatives of which have the status of refugees in our country. You will notice that this knowledge will change your opinion on the ones who live in your vicinity.

Try to travel more. If it is not possible for you to really travel, make virtual journeys with the help of the Internet and the television set. Get as much friends of a different nationality, race, religion, etc. as you can. Keep in touch with them; find out details on their traditional and religious holidays, about their culinary practices, clothing, and art. You will discover an infinite treasure and will re-evaluate your attitude towards strangers.

If you have made this step forward and in your relations with our people, human equality and dignity stands before skin color, spoken language, religion, etc., we congratulate you on the occasion of being a civilized person. But this is not enough. In order for discrimination to end a state policy must be in place in countries with non-democratic regimes, and discriminatory behavior and attitudes of some people will disappear. This can happen as a consequence of perseverant activity of millions that have acknowledged the importance of struggle against any form of discrimination. Include yourself in this noble work, be an active militant against the casting out of different categories of people, for the triumph of social equality and equity.

In the following topics, you will get to know of the activity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), of dedicated militants, concrete examples, success stories in the fight against injustice and discrimination. We are convinced that they can serve as models, or as practical instruments for the organization and accomplishment of your own activity in the field. We wish you good luck!

## Theme 27: HUMAN RIGHTS AND MASS-MEDIA

*Motto: Half of the word belongs to the one that says it and half to the one that listens to it. (Montaigne)*

Through words you perceive the world, express your feelings, communicate ideas, and receive information. Every day from the screens of TV sets, from the radio, from the newspapers an avalanche of information pours down on you. Some news stories are more optimistic, others more tragic, but they make up your image of the world. They make you take an attitude towards an event and to express your opinion. This is the miraculous power of the mass-media. That's the exact name of the totality of means of mass information — radio, television, press, Internet.

Thanks to these different means, everyone of us can exert his or rights on art. 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”*

The main role of mass-media is to inform. It is important for the citizen to be informed and familiarized with the human rights field, to cultivate the knowledge of democratic values, and the respect for these values and that the conditions necessary for the recognition and exertion of these rights should be created. A good knowledge of the rights allows for their optimal exertion. This is a belief that demonstrates its validity more and more often. Knowing is the first step towards doing; that's why the coverage of any human rights violation by the media immediately leads to the sensitizing of society and its active involvement in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Today's mass-media supports the movements of the people and raises citizens that are better informed thus better protected from any form of discrimination. They also consolidate the feeling of global solidarity, thus the images and information presented by the mass-media on human sufferings caused by the flagrant violations of human rights, motivates the people regardless their age and confession, to express their care and solidarity with the ones in need. Frequently people have contributed through possible aid efforts, and have asked for explanations and actions from the governments in question, in order to solve the problem.

A word “spread” by mass-media has a magic power today, but it also depends who it is addressed to. It's very complicated for the one who covers his or her ears to hear. Frequently it's the state institutions that close their ears. As a result, people who wish to be heard or to promote human rights through mass-media should insist on this and persevere.

The mass-media can rarely afford to take actions against the officials and in order for this not to happen, censorship is many times used. Yet we, the citizens of the state, have the right to express our opinion on television, radio, or press, tackling problems that affect the field of human rights. The mass media is also called the fourth power in the state. Use this power to promote and consolidate human rights in your country!



## Competence Laboratory



### Get informed

1. Enumerate the mass-media present in your community.



### Interpret

2. Explain why the mass-media is frequently called the fourth power in the state. What are its possibilities?



### Accomplish

3. Study the images of the mass-media. How true is their content?



### Analyze

4. Demonstrate the role of the mass-media in the promotion of human rights.



### Appreciate

5. Write an article for the school newspaper on the topic: "Human Rights in our school/class."



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## Considerable effort, result to measure



Journalists are the people that in the virtue of their profession are often the most informed people in the fields of fundamental human rights and freedoms. That's why the journalists are the ones that most often face, along with judicial experts, the cases of violations of human rights, especially when their own rights are violated.

An eloquent case of this is the one of journalist Julieta Savitchi, who was sued by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova a few years ago on the charges of insulting the dignity of a traffic agent. Being a specialist in writing articles on judicial matters, the journalist published in 1999 an article on the phenomenon of corruption in the road police. In this column, she described, based on a concrete event, the phenomenon of corruption and the improper behaviour of many traffic agents. Speaking about the driver who was jostled and insulted by a policeman, Julieta gave no names, describing just general facts. Yet, shortly after the column was published, the policeman whom the journalist didn't even know had recognized himself as being the one described in the article and sued her on the charges of insulting his dignity. All the courts that have examined this case, gave verdicts that were in favor of the policeman. This fact has disappointed but not discouraged the journalist. "I didn't expect to lose in the courts of the Republic of Moldova. I didn't think the verdict would be in favor of a policeman whose name wasn't mentioned and who recognized himself in the article despite saying that he didn't commit the things mentioned in the article," Julieta Savitchi told us.

The only way to defend her right to an opinion and free expression was the appeal to the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR). The trials examined by the European Court often take years to examine and many give up. But the journalist did not quit. The European Court for Human Rights examined the case of Julieta Savitchi and she won the trial. Thus the Republic of Moldova was found guilty of violating Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression. The high court has established that the journalist has used the study of values that are not subject to convictions. According to the decision of the ECHR, The Chisinau Government of Moldova was obligated to pay Julieta Savitchi 3,000 Euros worth of compensation as well as to return her trial expenses in total value of 1,500 Euros. The journalist opened a business with the compensation money. She said that although the struggle for the defense of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has involved considerable effort, the result is immeasurable. "This case made me think that every citizen, indifferent of his possibilities can and must defend his rights," Julieta Savitchi thinks. (Quote from the "Dreptul Meu" newspaper, Nr. 4, April 2007)



1. What right of Julieta's was violated?
2. How did Julieta claim her rights?