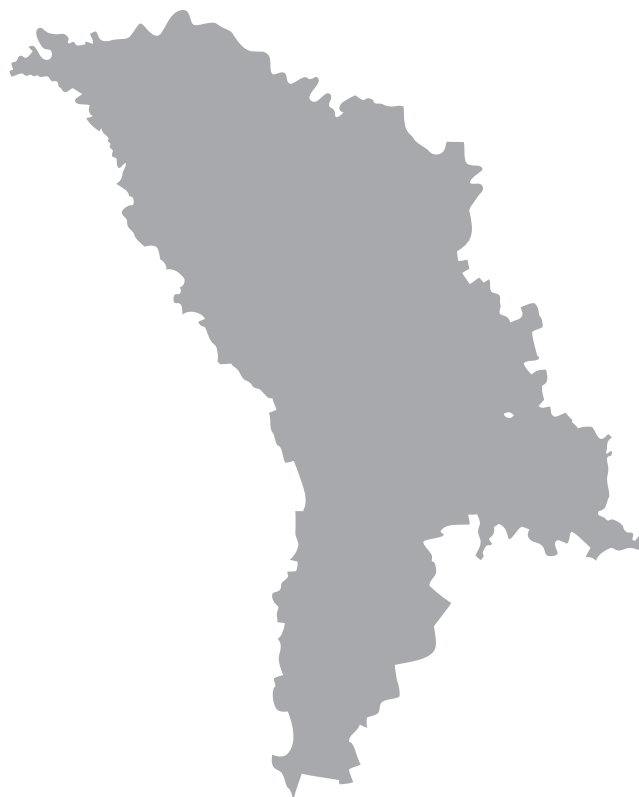


*In 2014, Moldova made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government updated its list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children and raised the compulsory education age to 18. The Government also took action to improve its policy framework by passing the sixth consecutive National Plan for Preventing and Combatting Human Trafficking, which develops a guide for improving prevention efforts, referral mechanisms, and support services for child victims of human trafficking. The Government also launched a new hotline to provide information and register complaints for children experiencing violence, neglect or exploitation, including exploitation through child labor. However, children in Moldova are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Funding for the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) was not sufficient and the Inspectorate's efforts to enforce child labor laws were hindered by barriers to conducting unannounced inspections. While the Government provides some financial support to programs addressing child labor, including human trafficking, most major child labor programs have been donor funded. These programs do not appear to be sustainable without outside financial assistance.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Moldova are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Moldova.

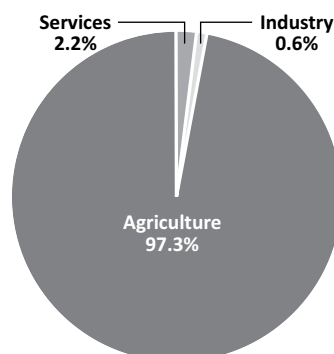
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	24.3 (102,105)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	92.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	29.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		89.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from LFS-SIMPOC Survey, 2009.(7)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including raising crops* and farm animals* (2, 3, 5)
Industry	Construction,* activities unknown (1, 2, 5)
Services	Street work,* activities unknown (8)
	Wholesale and retail trade,* activities unknown (2)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3-5, 9)

\* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

Child trafficking continues to be a concern in Moldova. Both boys and girls are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation within the country through brothels, saunas, and massage parlors, whereas girls are also trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation transnationally.(5, 10)




The latest national study on the situation of children in need and those whose parents work abroad, conducted in 2012, reveals that 105,270 (approximately 15 percent) of children have one or both parents working abroad.(1, 3) Children left behind by migrant parents, especially those who are institutionalized in orphanages or in boarding schools, may be particularly vulnerable to child labor and human trafficking.(5, 11-13)

Although the Education Code provides for free and compulsory education until age 18, parents are sometimes asked to pay informal fees for supplies and textbooks. Education-related costs and lack of transportation to school make it challenging for Roma children, in particular, to access education.(5, 12, 14-16)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Moldova has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

**Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor**

	Convention	Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 46 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova (17)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 255 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova (17)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Government Decision No. 541 List of Jobs with Difficult, Harmful and/or Dangerous Working Conditions Prohibited for Children Under Age 18; The Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 103, 105, and 255-256 of the Labor Code; Article 58 of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova (17-20)

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova; Article 6 of the Law on Children's Rights; Article 168 of the Criminal Code; Article 7 of the Labor Code; The Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (17, 18, 21-23)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 165 and 206 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova; Article 1 of the Law on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings; The Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (18, 22, 24)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 206 and 208 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova; Article 6 of the Law on Children's Rights; The Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (18, 22, 23)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 208 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova; The Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (18, 22, 25)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 28 of Law No. 1245-XV on the Preparation of Citizens for Homeland Defense (26, 27)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 12 of Law No. 162-XVI on the Status of Military Personnel (26, 28)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Article 13 of the Education Code (29)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 9 of the Education Code (29)

In 2014, the Government adopted Decision No. 541 to update and improve its list of hazardous work activities prohibited for children. The new list includes an extensive number of occupations and working conditions considered harmful for children in over 30 categories.(19, 30, 31) It also includes provisions regulating the weight limits for lifting and moving heavy loads.(19, 30, 31)

During the reporting period, the Government adopted a new Education Code that increases the compulsory education age from 16 to 18. The Ministry of Education also issued a decision that prohibits students from working in agriculture during the school year.(30, 31)

In January 2014, the Law on the Special Protection of Children at Risk and Children Separated From Their Parents entered into effect. Through Decision No. 270, the Government adopted procedures for interagency cooperation on the identification, evaluation, assistance, monitoring, and registering of vulnerable children, including victims of exploitation and human trafficking. (30-33)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) within the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF)	Enforce all labor laws, including child labor laws. Investigate cases with possible labor law violations, including those that relate to children.(3, 30) Manage the National Referral System (NRS) and lead victim rehabilitation efforts.(13)
Multidisciplinary Teams	Act on a local level to identify children involved in the worst forms of child labor, provide better alternatives to child laborers, continue to monitor the living conditions of identified children, and use the collected information for policy development. In 2014, the teams were extended to every district in the country.(3, 30, 31)
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA)	Enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Have officers dedicated to child protection and child labor.(3)

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)**

Organization/Agency	Role
The Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP), subdivision of MOIA	Lead criminal investigations and arrest the perpetrators involved in trafficking of persons, including trafficking of children.(3) In 2014, CCTIP was reorganized into three investigative sections specializing in combating trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation; labor exploitation and begging; and child trafficking for the removal of organs, tissues, and cells. (13, 30)
Service for Information and Security (SIS)	Enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and sexual exploitation through cooperation and exchanging information with CCTIP.(3)
Prosecutor General's Office (PGO)	Conduct and oversee criminal investigations of cases, including the worst forms of child labor exploitation; prosecute cases of worst forms of child labor in court and at the Supreme Court of Justice; and represent the rights of child victims in cases when their civil rights are violated.(32) Employ seven prosecutors to deal with trafficking in persons cases as well as trafficking of children cases.(30) Composed of 36 prosecutorial offices throughout the country, which have prosecutors specialized in handling of child trafficking cases.(3, 32)
The National Council for the Protection of Child Rights within the National Commission for Consultation and Collective Bargaining	Inform and provide consultation to members of the National Commission for Consultation and Collective Bargaining's members about the worst forms of child labor and protecting child rights. (1)
The Parliamentary Ombudsman	Promote the UN CRC and defend the constitutional rights of children. Request cooperation from public authorities and public institutions on child protection issues.(3)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and sexual exploitation.(3) Draft, consult, and propose all processes related to legislation for the Government's approval before they enter in force.(32)

Law enforcement agencies in Moldova took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

### ***Labor Law Enforcement***

The State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) employs 109 staff members, with 22 officers stationed in the central office and 87 posted in 10 regional branches.(3) Two additional labor inspectors staff the Child Labor Monitoring Unit (CLMU).(31) All SLI inspectors are trained according to the national curriculum on combating child labor, developed with support from ILO-IPEC.(30, 31) For 2014, SLI's total budget was \$776,000.(30) The Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF) noted that the amount of funding allocated to conduct inspections is insufficient.(30, 31)

From January to November 2014, SLI conducted 6,190 inspections of over 5,500 businesses.(30, 31) Law permits the inspectorate to conduct desk reviews and on-site child labor inspections in both legally registered workplaces and on private farms.(17) However, SLI may not conduct an unannounced site visit unless it receives a petition from a working child or the child's parent. In the majority of cases, SLI is required to give 5 days' notice prior to entering a workplace, which reduces the effectiveness of the inspections.(30) In 2014, SLI launched the Automatized Information System, which will improve data collection on labor law enforcement, including disaggregated data on the number of child labor violations detected.(31) According to MLSPF, in 2014, inspectors discovered 15 minors employed in violation of labor laws and 4 who were involved in hazardous work activities prohibited for children.(31) All 19 children were removed from work and assisted by the Government.(30, 31) During the reporting period, SLI inspectors issued citations for nine child labor law violations. Moldovan courts levied fines in 5 cases, with the total amounting to \$2,500.(30)

### ***Criminal Law Enforcement***

In 2014, the Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP) employed 43 officers to investigate cases of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) assigned 7 prosecutors to handle trafficking in persons cases.(30) During the reporting period, a total of 4,023 specialists, including members of Multidisciplinary Teams, judges, prosecutors, border police officers, and criminal investigators, received training on issues related to the worst forms of child labor, especially human trafficking. The Government also provided specialized training on interviewing techniques for child victims and witnesses of abuse and sexual exploitation.(30)

During the reporting period, law enforcement officials investigated 24 cases of potential child trafficking and identified 26 child victims.(13) In October, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) adopted a standard referral form to register all suspected cases of violence, neglect, exploitation, and trafficking of children.(30) Law enforcement officials ensure that potential victims of child trafficking receive appropriate social services through the country's National Referral System (NRS).(13) Child victims may be placed in rehabilitation clinics, shelters, foster care, or with relatives depending on the situation. Shelters provide medical, legal, social, and psychological support.(3, 13) The Government assisted 15 child victims during the reporting period.(13)

In 2014, officials brought seven child trafficking cases to trial, which resulted in the conviction of nine individuals for human trafficking offences. Of the nine convicted, eight human traffickers are currently serving jail time.(13) However, despite efforts to improve the prosecution of perpetrators of human trafficking, there is evidence that corruption in the judicial system continues to constrain the Government's ability to enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(13)

#### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
The National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor (NSC)	Coordinate work on child labor issues at the national level between representatives from workers' organizations, NGOs, academia, and the following government agencies: the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF); the Ministry of Education (MOE); the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food Processing Industry; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Health (MOH); the Ministry of Interior (MOI); the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the State Chancellery; the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI); the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO); and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).(3)
Child Labor Monitoring Unit (CLMU)	Supervise national-level activities related to combating child labor and serve as a coordinating mechanism between NSC at the national level and multidisciplinary teams at the local level.(3, 31)
The National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Persons (NCCTIP)	Coordinate the Government's overall efforts to prevent and combat TIP.(3) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFA) and includes representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA); the MLSPF; the MOH, the MOE, the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the Border Guard Service; the Security and Information Service (SIS); the PGO; the Secretary of the Supreme Security Council; the Governor of the Gagauz Autonomous Region; the General Police Inspectorate; the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI); and the Bureau for Relations with Diaspora within the State Chancellery.(13)
The Permanent Secretariat (PS) under NCCTIP	Monitor implementation of legal provisions on combating TIP set out by the NCCTIP. Establish working groups for drafting new provisions on TIP, participate in anti-TIP campaigns, develop the national action plans, and seek support for projects.(13, 34)
National Coordination Unit (NCU) within the MLSPF	Coordinate activities related to the protection of victims and potential victims of human trafficking. Build the capacity of Multidisciplinary Teams at the local level to improve victim identification and referral for crisis intervention and rehabilitation.(35) Comprised of community social assistants, police officers, and NGO workers.(35)

Despite the important coordinating role of the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor (NSC), the NSC did not meet in 2014 to discuss child labor issues. This may impact the overall efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms, on a national level.(3, 30)

In 2014, the Government of Moldova issued a decree to institutionalize the Permanent Secretariat (PS) under the National Committee for Combatting Trafficking in Persons (NCCTIP), establishing four permanent staff positions and providing full funding for the first time.(13)

#### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Moldova has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

**Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
The National Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (NAP) (2011–2015)	Outlines 44 objectives to be implemented by 30 stakeholders to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by specific deadlines. Includes plans to institutionalize a child labor monitoring system in Moldova, increase access to education, provide rehabilitation and reintegration support for children withdrawn from child labor, and raise awareness on child labor issues in nine districts.(3, 31, 36) In 2014, the Government achieved one objective through the launch of the Automatized Information System for registering child labor violations.(30)
National Plan for Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2014–2016)†	Aims to improve national anti-human trafficking efforts and reduce the vulnerability of children to labor and sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking. Includes specific objectives to build the capacity of government officials through training on TIP issues; improve systematic data collection; raise public awareness; and improve repatriation and referral mechanisms for child trafficking victims.(37)
The Strategy of the National Referral System to Protect and Assist Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (NRS) (2009–2016)	Outlines a comprehensive framework for cooperation between government institutions and civil society organizations for the protection of victims and potential victims of human trafficking. Focuses on awareness raising activities, improving victim identification and referral mechanisms and building the capacity of counter-human trafficking actors through ongoing training and technical assistance. Regulates the work of the Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) operating throughout the country as well as the National Coordination Unit (NCU). Launched by the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF).(35)
The National Plan on Community Support of Children in Need for (2007–2014)*	Aims to provide social inclusion and protection for children in need through various services and initiatives.(3, 38)
European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Wellbeing (2011–2014)*	Aims to have a direct impact on the prevention of the worst forms of child labor by ensuring access to early education; increasing the number of kindergartens and schools in communities; promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities and those from socially vulnerable families; and promoting the deinstitutionalization of children.(38)
Action Plan for the Support of the Roma People from the Republic of Moldova (2011–2015)*	Aims to improve social inclusion of the Roma people, including equal access to quality education for Romani boys and girls. Establishes a system of 48 Romani Community Mediators supported by the State budget to advocate for Roma issues at the national level.(14, 39)
Child Protection Strategy (2014–2020)*†	Seeks to bring the Moldovan child protection system into compliance with international standards. Sets three general objectives for improving the situation of children: development of necessary conditions for raising children in families; preventing and combating violence, neglect, and exploitation of children; and assisting working parents in the upbringing and development of children.(30, 40)

\* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Moldova funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Free, Strong, and Safe—to a Better Child Protection System*	UNICEF and OAK Foundation-funded program implemented by the National Center for Prevention of Child Abuse (CNPAC) and the Center for Information and Documentation on Child Rights (CIDDC), in partnership with several government ministries, that aims to develop an integrated education and social assistance system for the protection of vulnerable children, including victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Aims to improve prevention, identification, referral, and protection mechanisms.(3, 41)
Combatting child trafficking project	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-funded project implemented by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF), and local NGOs to prevent child trafficking by providing professional and life skills training to at-risk children without parental care in 12 residential schools across 10 regions. In 2014, the project was extended to Transdnistria.(42)
UNICEF-Government of Moldova Country Program (2013–2017)*‡	Government and the United Nations program to improve social inclusion of vulnerable children and their families and to promote social change for child rights. Focuses on children affected by migration, Roma children, and child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.(30, 43)



**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Ajutor Social Program*‡	Government and the World Bank cash benefit program that targets the poor.(44, 45)
Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Social Safety Net Project (2011–2016)*	\$37 million, World Bank-funded project implemented by MLSPF to improve the country's social safety net through expanding and strengthening the Ajutor Social Program, among other things. Provides social assistance based on household income to reach the poorest population.(32, 46, 47)
Education Assistance Programs*‡	Government program that seeks to improve access to education by providing a monthly payment of \$27 for a period of up to six months to cover the cost of school supplies for children from vulnerable families.(31) In 2014, the Government of Moldova allocated approximately \$487,000 for this purpose, and the municipality of Chisinau allocated \$303,000. Amount per child varies slightly across the regions depending on local administration budgets.(32, 41)
Financial Assistance Program*‡	Government and donor-funded program that provides financial assistance to poor families with children in installments of approximately \$32 per month for a maximum of 6 months or as a lump sum of approximately \$192. Financial assistance is mandated through Government Decision No. 780, passed in September 2014.(3, 30, 41)
Children in Moldova are Cared for in Safe and Secure Families Program (2014–2017)†	\$4.4 million, USAID-funded project implemented by Partnerships for Every Child that aims to build the capacity of MLSPF and the Ministry of Education to strengthen national child protection systems. Includes the objective of supporting children living in institutions, family-based care, and group homes to attend school.(30, 48)
Child Helpline†	Donor-funded telephone support service for children, implemented by the international NGO "La Strada and managed by MLSPF. Provides psychological counseling and information to parents, caregivers, and children who may be experiencing violence, neglect or exploitation.(31, 49) In 2014, operators answered a total of 1,300 calls and provided counseling for 488 adults and 414 children. There were no calls specifically related to child labor.(31)
Shelters for victims of human trafficking‡	Government-funded shelters for TIP victims in seven locations throughout the country, some of which provide specialized services for children. Offer accommodation as well as rehabilitation and reintegration services.(13) In 2014, the government increased funding for shelters from \$373,295 in 2013 to \$517,195.(13)

\* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Moldova.

While the Government of Moldova provides some financial support to programs addressing both child labor and trafficking, most major child labor programs operate with significant donor funding. These programs do not appear to be sustainable without outside financial assistance.(1, 3)

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Moldova (Table 9).

**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including Its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Increase funding for the State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) to ensure that inspectors have the financial resources necessary to carry out adequate child labor inspections.	2012 – 2014
	Enable inspectors to conduct unannounced child labor inspections in both the formal and informal sectors.	2013 – 2014
	Strengthen measures to reduce corruption in the judicial system to ensure that perpetrators of crimes related to the worst forms of child labor are convicted and sentenced according to law.	2014
Coordination	Ensure that the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor (NSC) meets regularly to discuss and coordinate issues related to the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2013 – 2014

**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including Its Worst Forms (cont)**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in the industry and service sectors to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2014
	Increase funding for education and monitor schools to ensure that extra educational fees are not imposed on children for the mandated term of free education through age 18.	2010 – 2014
	Institute targeted support programs for Romani children that promote equal access to education.	2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2014
	Ensure current child labor programs are sustainable by providing increased financial support.	2009 – 2014

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