



**1<sup>st</sup> meeting, Brussels, 10 May 2016**

### **JOINT DECLARATION**

The EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform (CSP) is one of the bodies set up within the framework of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova. It enables civil society organizations from both sides to monitor the implementation process, and prepare its recommendations to the relevant authorities.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and inaugural meeting of the CSP was held on 10 May 2016 at the EESC in Brussels. Members of the CSP discussed the state of play in the implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, and held a debate and adopted reports on rule of law and good governance.

With regard to the **implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement** the CSP members:

1. welcome the provisional application of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova, and look forward to its imminent full application as of 1 July 2016; moreover, note with satisfaction that by now all parliaments of the EU Member States have ratified the Agreement;
2. emphasize that a broad and deep reform process is a precondition for Moldova's political association and economic integration with the EU; in this regard, acknowledge the efforts undertaken in the Republic of Moldova to put in practice the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Association Agreement for the period of 2014-2016;
3. commend the Priority Reform Action Roadmap comprising priority measures to be adopted or implemented until the end of July 2016; however, express a deep concern about the slow pace in implementing the Association Agenda commitments by the Government of Moldova; hence, urge it to undertake more efforts and implement these commitments in a determined and swift manner, bringing about tangible results and thus restoring the trust of the Moldovan citizens as well as of the EU in the capacity of Moldovan authorities to take resolute action;
4. stress that the most pressing reforms pertain to the judiciary and public administration, preventing and fighting systemic corruption, addressing the politicization of state institutions, ensuring transparency, accountability, resilience and good governance in the management of public finances, improving the competitiveness of Moldovan goods, promoting active labor policies for productive and decent work for all and fighting organized crime;

5. particularly emphasize the need to speed up the investigations related to the banking frauds, apply the rule-of-law principles regarding the persons and institutions involved in the banking frauds, increase the pace and transparency of asset recovery of the failed banks, make sure that all banks' shareholders are fit-and-proper, reform and strengthen the financial stability framework, and align the Moldovan legislation with the EU *acquis* in the area of countering money-laundering;
6. welcome the Moldovan Government's commitment to involve and consult the CSP in the intended reform process; in order for the Platform to be able to bring a meaningful contribution towards it, invite the Government to identify solutions to ensure the necessary financial and logistical support for the sustainability of the Moldovan side of this Platform;
7. encourage the Moldovan Government to promote programs to increase the capacity of the civil society organizations and to strengthen the institutional mechanisms of civic dialogue; request that social partners and institutionalized social dialogue is supported;
8. note with regret the concentrated ownership of mass media and the increasing pressure on journalists by political elites in the Republic of Moldova, which has led to a deterioration in Moldova's ranking in the Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index (from 72<sup>nd</sup> place in 2014 to 76<sup>th</sup> in 2015 out of 180 countries);
9. recall that freedom of media is one of the fundamental human rights, and urge the Government to make the necessary changes in the national legislation in order to dismantle the concentration of ownership in media as soon as possible;
10. underline the importance of and stress the need to intensify efforts towards reaching a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, based on the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova;
11. recall that the Platform shall be informed of the decisions and recommendations of the EU-Moldova Association Council, and look forward to regular contacts with representatives from the Parliamentary Association Committee and the Association Committee, including the created sectoral Subcommittees;
12. reiterate the need for the Moldovan Government to fully comply and follow through with all commitments based on the ratified ILO conventions, the provisions of the European Social Charter and eventually the EU *acquis*;
13. encourage the Government of Moldova to start modernizing the labour legislation in consultation with the social partners;
14. with regard to the social dialogue, urge the Moldovan Government to ensure its effectiveness at the national level by providing a higher status to the decisions of the National Commission for consultations and collective bargaining, and to guarantee the implementation of the principles of equality and parity in the chairing of meetings of the National Commission.

With regard to **the rule of law and good governance** the CSP members:

15. note that pillars of a modern justice system are its independence, professionalism, efficiency, accountability and transparency, and are concerned with the serious shortcomings regarding these elements in the judiciary and law enforcement institutions of the Republic of Moldova; urge the Government to proceed with the implementation of the Justice sector reform strategy without delay;
  16. acknowledge the adoption of a comprehensive legal framework and the establishment of specialized institutions for fighting corruption in Moldova; however, regret the lack of political will from the side of the Government to ensure independent functioning of these institutions without political interference;
  17. particularly, call on the Moldovan Government to clarify by law the powers and the mandate of the National Anti-Corruption Centre and those of the National Integrity Commission in relation to other institutions with similar responsibilities, and to increase the capacity and efficiency of the system dealing with the control of civil servants' wealth and interests by establishing the National Centre for Integrity;
  18. invite the Moldovan Government to involve the relevant civil society organizations in the assessment of the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2011-2015, in organizing a public discussion of its results and in identifying the lessons learnt for improving the fight against corruption;
  19. call on the Moldovan Government to start consultations for the drafting of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2017-2018 and set up the framework for the involvement of civil society organizations in this process;
  20. ask the Moldovan Government to create conditions for attracting investment and reduce the informal economy, thus stimulating economic development.
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