

RADIOGRAPHY OF ATTACKS

AGAINST NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2018

The Radiography of Attacks against non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Moldova represents a joint effort to document factual and analytical information and events attempting to deteriorate the environment for the activity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Moldova. This edition covers the period of 1 January - 31 December 2018. A [similar document was also developed in 2017](#) and covered the period from September 2016 to December 2017.¹

The activity on monitoring and documentation of attacks emerged in the context of a growing number of actions aimed at discrediting and denigrating independent CSOs, after they have expressed their dissenting position regarding several actions of the government over the last few years². This fact was recently confirmed, including by international experts who visited the Republic of Moldova. In his latest report regarding Moldova, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders has expressed concern that public authorities have often discredited human rights defenders and their work, while CSOs involved in political rights have been accused of dishonesty, lack of equidistance, and following a foreign agenda not aligned with national interests.³

For the purposes of this document, attacks mean in particular statements and actions by politicians, especially those from the government, publication of articles and media reports or public interventions that portray the non-profit sector as organizations promoting the interests of foreign countries or serving the interests of political parties. In other cases, these attacks take the form of direct actions by launching legislative initiatives aimed at deteriorating the CSOs' working environment.

The main purpose of this document is to draw attention to the danger of orchestrated attacks on the operation of CSOs and to determine public authorities, private institutions and individuals supporting those attacks to stop them and allow the CSOs to act freely. This document also aims to enable the CSOs to formulate a prompt response to attacks against them.

The phenomenon of attacks on the civil society activity is not an isolated issue characteristic for the Republic of Moldova, but rather a trend in the countries from the region with a fragile level of democracy. The methods and tools by which this is done are becoming more and more sophisticated and widespread.⁴ One of the many negative outcomes of these actions is that it forces the CSOs and

¹ See Radiography of attacks on non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Moldova, September 2016-December 2017, available at: https://crjm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2018-02-21_radiografia-atac-ONGs_fin.pdf.

² Macrinici S., Policy brief „Shrinking space for Civil Society Moldova”, 2018, available at: <https://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/Civil%20Society%20Macrinici.pdf>.

³ Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Visit to the Republic of Moldova, 2019, A/HRC/40/60/Add.3, par. 36-37, available at: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/60/ADD.3>.

⁴ Balfour R., Bouchet N., Policy brief „Supporting Civil society in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans: Old and New Challenges”, 2018, GMF Europe Program, available at: <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/supporting-civil-society-eastern-europe-and-western-balkans-old-and-new-challenges>.

civic activists to self-censor or „scale back” on their activities.⁵ Based on the experience of other states in the region, stigmatization of the CSOs can be a precursor to some persecution actions by the state authorities.⁶

This problem has recently been recognized in a wider context by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. On 28 November 2018, the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space, where it noted with concern that human rights defenders, CSOs and journalists are still too often victims of violations and abuses, being the target of threats and attacks on them and their activity, despite efforts at both national and international levels.⁷ The Recommendation expresses the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe, taking into account the shrinking space for civil society, resulting from laws, policies and austerity measures taken recently by some Member States. The Recommendation calls on States to ensure an enabling legal framework and a conducive political and public environment for human rights defenders, including journalists, information groups and CSOs for to be involved in the decision-making process.

The information included in the document was obtained from media resources available on-line and social networks as well as from its quantitative and qualitative analysis. The monitoring and documentation of the attacks took place during 2018. The monitoring is not intended to be exhaustive. Attacks are presented in chronological order starting with January 2018. Some attacks have been reported in a single block, such as those concerning the CSOs that stood against some of the draft laws, namely the attempt to limit CSO funding from abroad in the case of the "Open Dialogue" or attacks in the context of parliamentary elections, etc.

Data was collected from publicly available resources and subjected to the peer review by signatory organizations. The signatory organizations will periodically update the information regarding the attacks.

If you have any information that can be qualified as an attack on the CSOs, it can be sent to ilie.chirtoaca@crjm.org for to be included in the next monitoring report.

The initiative to document and monitor attacks [is inspired from Hungary](#), a country whose not-for-profit sector has been facing similar challenges for a few years now. The document is drafted and presented by the signatory organizations indicated at the end of the document that initially collaborated for collecting the data. The signatory organizations are mentioned at the end of the document.

The signatory organizations are presented at the end of the document. The list of signatories remains open.

⁵ Amnesty International, „Laws designed to silence: the global crackdown on civil society organizations” (2019) ACT 30/9647/2019, p. 2, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3096472019ENGLISH.PDF>.

⁶ Buyse A., „Squeezing civic space: restrictions on civil society organizations and the linkages with human rights”, (2018) The International Journal of Human Rights, 22:8, p. 966-988, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642987.2018.1492916>.

⁷ Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe, available at: https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=09000016808fd8b9.

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| <p>16 January 2018</p> <p>Attacks against CSOs related to the CEC refusal to annul the new mixed electoral system</p> | <p>16 January 2018 – the online media platform Moldova24.info published an article entitled „They request politicians to respect the law, but violate it themselves! Civil society, angry that the CEC did not shut its eyes to the violation of the law when the initiative group for cancelling the mixed voting was registered”. The article provides comments on an interview given by Andrei LUTENCO, Program Director at the Centre for Policies and Reforms (CPR). In the interview in question, Mr. Lutenco disagreed with some of the reasons invoked by the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) for to reject the request for registration of the initiative group to hold the referendum on annulling the mixed electoral system.</p> <p>The media platform Moldova24.info has distorted Mr. Lutenco's statements in the interview, suggesting that he asked the CEC to ignore the law. Shortly after, this article was reproduced almost entirely by other media portals and platforms, slightly changing only the heading of the news, or the news being republished under some new headings. All articles were published on the same day, and namely: Publika.md „Civil society representatives who requested the referendum against the mixed voting admit that they committed violations”; Lifenews.md „The law should be applied, but not for civil society! The representative of a NGO acknowledges that the law was not fully complied with while setting up the initiative group for to cancel the mixed voting, but says the CEC should shut the eyes on it”; Hotnews.md „The authors of the initiative regarding anti-mixed voting referendum admit that they committed mistakes while organizing the group for the referendum and qualify them as „legal trifles”, but accept their fulfilment” and Moldova24.info „The authors of the anti-mixed voting referendum initiative admit that they have committed deviations in the organization of the group for referendum and accept to fulfil them”. At the end of the articles it is mentioned that <i>„the initiative to hold the referendum for to cancel the mixed electoral system would belong to the Party „Dignity and Truth”, the Party „Our Party” and the Communist Party, but also to a group of NGOs that support the political ideas of the opposition parties”</i>.</p> <p>On the same day, Publika.md published another similar article entitled „The incredible blunder of some NGOs! They wanted to cancel ALREADY abrogated law and were about to leave the country without an electoral system”. The article referred to the CEC press release announcing the decision to reject the initiative to hold the referendum on annulment of the mixed electoral system. Although the heading of the news mentions the so-called „blunder“ of the NGOs, the content of the news refers exclusively to the initiative group and the press release by the CEC, without mentioning a particular NGO.</p> <p>Note: The publication of identical news, with only slight modification of the heading, denotes the concerted nature of the aforementioned publications. The purpose of the publication seems to influence the public opinion by presenting in a negative way the activity of the CSO/representatives of a CSO. Taken as a whole, the publications aim rather at discrediting the image of the CSOs than at informing the readers.</p> |
| <p>5 February 2018</p> | <p>On 5 February 2018, a press release on statistical data concerning prosecutors' complaints regarding the interception and recording of communications in 2017 was published on the Prosecutor General's Office website. It is mentioned in the press</p> |

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| | <p>release, among other things, that: „during the last year, a non-governmental organization has provided information that „interceptions of telephone conversations are used very often, giving figures of tens of thousands“ and that „upon analysis of this information ... and its comparison to the real state of things obtained from legal and public sources, it was proved that there have been great divergences“.</p> <p>Note: Taking into account the fact that the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) had previously published analyses on this issue, the LRCM published a clarification stating that the statistical data on the special investigation activity with which the General Prosecutor's Office operates differs considerably from the data provided by the Agency for Courts Administration (ACA), and the LRCM has used the data provided by ACA in its analyses. The LRCM also noted that the difference in statistical data probably results from the different methodology used by the Prosecutor General's Office and the ACA, the prosecutor's office is calculating the number of criminal cases in which interception is taking place, while the ACA - all authorizations for interceptions, including their extensions. The LRCM specified that the difference between the data submitted by the General Prosecutor's Office and by the ACA regarding the number of requests for authorization of telephone interceptions should be explained by these public institutions. In the article published by Ziarul de Gardă on 7 February 2018, both institutions confirmed the different way of keeping evidence on statistical data.</p> |
| <p><i>February - December 2018</i></p> <p>Attacks against API and Petru MACOVEI</p> | <p>On 6 February 2018 - Corneliu GANDRABUR, a blogger, publishes an article entitled „Does Petru Macovei turn the API into the outpost of Renato Usatii's mafia?“. Throughout the entire article, the author operates with denigrating qualifiers against Petru MACOVEI, the Executive Director of the Association of Independent Press. The article suggests that the API director would dictate the editorial policy to regional newspapers and would make political propaganda in favour of LDPM (Liberal and Democratic Party), PAS (Action and Solidarity Party), PPDA (Platform “Dignity and Truth”), PN (Our Party) and PSRM (Socialist Party), and these parties are coordinated by the Kremlin and the Russian Mafia. As „evidence“, the author publishes extracts from regional newspapers in which several articles are published under the tag „political advertising“. The author also suggests that the activity of the API is a danger to the functioning of democracy. The article reflects exclusively the author's opinion, without presenting a reaction of the persons or association concerned.</p> <p>On 6 November 2018 - Media platform Timpul.md publishes a similar article entitled „Local press is desperate! The Association of Independent Press establishes censorship and protectionism!“ in which it reports that local publications are subjects to pressure on the side of the API that dictates them their editorial policy, including prohibition to media outlets to publish materials having no opinion of PAS and PPDA. Moreover, according to the article signed by the editorial board of Timpul.md, it would be forbidden for local press to use images in which Maia SANDU, Andrei NASTASE or other leaders of PAS or PPDA appear together with Ludmila KOZLOWSKA (see Open Dialogue case). The article ends with the allusion that the API is affiliated with PAS and PPDA,</p> |

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| | <p>including as stated by some opinion leaders. The article does not contain any reference to or reaction of the persons concerned in the article or certain quoted sources.</p> <p>The article was republished on the same day by media portals Today.md and Telegraph.md.</p> <p>Note: On 7 November 2018, the API Administration Board signed a statement that denied the contents of the article published by Timpul.md, qualifying it as false and absurd. The API refuted the allegations on political affiliation and requested the editorial board of Timpul.md and other websites and blogs that republished the article with false allegations about the API to publish this statement as a right of reply.</p> <p>On 29 November 2018 - Eugen LUCHIANIUC, a blogger, publishes a similar denigrating article against the Association of Independent Press and the Executive Director of the API Petru MACOVEI: „Get acquainted: Petru Macovei, the owner of the „Association of Independent Press““. Among the accusations, the author states that the activity of the organization is used for money laundering, and the activity of the Press Council, whose secretary is Macovei, is useless. Luchianiuc says he was previously wronged by the Press Council when he filed some complaints. The article contains obscene language.</p> <p>The article was republished on the same day by the media portal Today.md</p> <p>On 3 December 2018 - Eugen LUCHIANIUC, a blogger, publishes the second article that has a similar content to the article published in the newspaper/online newspaper Timpul.md. This time the blogger posted an anonymous letter written by an alleged local newspaper representative, member of the API. The author of the letter published by Eugen LUCHIANIUC says that Macovei would forbid the newspapers, members of the API to criticize the block ACUM (PAS and PPDA Parties). Luchianiuc writes at the end of the article that this is <i>"the true face of the "civil society" in Moldova!"</i></p> |
| <p>15 March 2018 Attacks against IEP, IPRE and IPIS</p> | <p>Veaceslav BALACCI and zepelin.md portal published an article entitled „The Moldovan Civic Nation“, „common language“, Molotov-Ribbentrop 2, or the Monstrous Coalition of the Putin’s Russia and European Germany in Moldova“. The article implies, among other things, the existence of a secret collaboration between the Russian Federation and Germany, which would act through the civil society and the press in Chisinau, and the fact that it would propagate „Romanian phobia“. As “evidence”, the authors of the article published private correspondence, financial information related to the implementation of a joint project by the Institute for European Policies (IEP) from Berlin, the Institute for Strategic Initiatives (IPIS) and the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), and the payments made to an expert contracted within the framework of the project (Mark TKACIUC, historian, former MP of the Communist Party) for the elaboration of a study.</p> <p>Note: On 21 March 2018, IPRE, IPIS and IEP published a joint reaction that categorically refuted any attempt to undermine the activity of the CSOs. The authors condemned the use of personal data and financial information obtained illegally by violating private correspondence. Signatory CSOs stressed that the project implemented by the three associations aimed to strengthen social cohesion and inter-ethnic dialogue in the</p> |

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| | <p>Republic of Moldova in the process of association with the European Union and that the article published by zeppelin contains invented insinuations. On 19 April 2018, upon notification on the side of those three organizations concerned, the Press Council issued a decision regarding this case, stating that the information in the article published on 15 March 2018 was presented from a single perspective, violating the provisions of the Code of Ethics of the journalist of the Republic of Moldova that obliges the journalist to request the opinion of all parties relevant for the subject.</p> |
| <p>April – May 2018</p> <p>Attacks against NGOs in the context of local elections</p> | <p>On 3 and 20 April 2018 - Corneliu GANDRABUR, a blogger, published a series of denigrating articles (Article 1) (Article 2) against the CSOs in general and Mr. Sergiu TOFILAT, Energy Analyst from Watchdog association, in the context of his participation in the local elections of the Mayor of Chisinau municipality. The articles contain obscene language, accusations of political affiliation of the NGOs to the opposition parties (PAS, LDPM) and alleged relation to with the bank fraud.</p> <p>18 April 2018 - Promo-LEX Association becomes subject of some intimidation actions the day before the presentation of the report of the Observation Mission on the New Local Election as of 20 May 2018. The representatives of the Association were threatened with imprisonment and physical abuse by a person who forcedly entered the offices of the Association, making threats (see Promo-LEX press conference on 19 April 2018, minute 27:00).</p> <p>18 May 2018 - two days before the local elections (the first round), the news portal Today.md published an article entitled <i>"Maia Sandu acknowledges that civil society is making politics alongside with the PAS"</i>. The author stated that Maia SANDU would have publicly acknowledged the involvement of the civil society <i>"in the political games of the party she is leading"</i> in a television broadcast. In the content of the article, the author also cited Valeriu MUNTEANU, a candidate at the local elections on the side of the Liberal Party (LP), who said that the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) was openly supporting the PPDA leader Andrei NASTASE. In support of their statement, the editorial board of Today.md later referred to a material produced by the Centre for Investigative Journalism, which would demonstrate that non-governmental organizations were involved in politics, and also to a survey by the Marketing and Surveys Institute (IMAS), which would state that 67% of Moldovans believe that the activity of Moldovan NGOs is influenced by politics. The same survey has been repeatedly used for denigrating broadcasts or articles in the on-line press regarding civil society, being reported in the Radiography of attacks on civil society 2016-2017 (see p. 18 of the document). On the same day the entire article was republished, being slightly changed only the heading of the news, by the following on-line portals: Lifenews.md „Civil society involved in politics alongside PAS, recognizes Maia Sandu“ and Moldova24.info „Maia Sandu confirms: NGOs are involved in political games of PAS“.</p> <p>Note 1: The survey quoted by the author was carried out by the sociological company IMAS in 2017 at the order of the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM). Some survey questions are manipulating for to determine responses that are unfavourable to civil society. This was reported by 45 NGOs on 18 December 2017 when they issued a joint statement condemning the manipulative actions of the IMAS and DPM, noting that they</p> |

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| | <p>represent an attack against the CSOs. The same survey has been repeatedly used for denigrating broadcasts or articles in the on-line press regarding civil society, being reported in the Radiography of attacks on civil society 2016-2017 (see p. 18 of the document).</p> <p>Note 2: According to the investigation by the Centre for Investigative Journalism carried out in 2017, referred to by the author, concerning the donations obtained by the parties, some employees of the NGOs made donations to some parties. Donations made by individuals do not mean the support of the organization for that party. Therefore, the assertion that the investigation has demonstrated that non-governmental organizations are involved in politics is false. Under art. 26 of the Law on Political Parties and according to the international best practices, any natural person (including NGO employees) is entitled to make donations to political parties from one's income after having paid taxes.</p> |
| <p>3 May 2018 Attacks against the CSOs in the context of the protest organized on Press Freedom Days</p> | <p>3 May 2018 - A group of journalists and CSO representatives participated in the Solidarity March, which opened Press Freedom Days in Moldova. Participants in the demonstration marched and protested including in front of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.</p> <p>3 May 2018 - Andrian CANDU, the President of the Parliament, at a press briefing (minute 13:20) commented on the actions of journalists and NGOs who participated in the protest stating, among others: „<i>They are doing nothing but write projects, get financing from abroad and have to use that money. And they are accustomed to organize protests on this day of the year. But besides organizing a protest, they should better come and make some efforts and do something</i> "[...]. The President of Parliament was apparently disturbed by the fact that journalists from the Republic of Moldova decided to celebrate the World Press Freedom Day through protest actions in front of the Parliament premises.</p> <p>On the same day, Corneliu GANDRABUR, a blogger, published a denigrating article against the CSOs and journalists, who organized the Solidarity March on 3 May 2018. The author praised the President of Parliament Andrian CANDU for refusing to come up to the protesters. Similarly to some previous articles, Mr. Gandrabur presents the CSOs and journalists who participated in the protest as beneficiaries of financial resources from the bank accounts of offshore companies owned by the former Prime Minister Vladimir Filat, and urges readers, among other things, that they should be „<i>excluded from the community and thrown to the slaughterhouse for compromised individuals</i>“. The article contains obscene language.</p> <p>Note: On 4 May 2018, several media NGOs issued a statement criticizing the inappropriate tone of the Speaker Andrian CANDU statements and the accusations he made against the free press and civil society. In the opinion of the signatory NGOs, attempts to diminish the role of free press and non-governmental organizations in a society that is only taking the first steps on the path of democracy do not fit into the pro-European discourse of the current government. Regarding the fact that some participants in the protest <i>do nothing else but write projects</i>, the signatory organizations stated that there is no loyal competition on the media market of the Republic of</p> |

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| | <p>Moldova, they face the phenomenon of concentration of media assets and the monopolization of the advertising market. In this context, participation in such projects is of vital importance to the mass media. In the absence of external donors, the Republic of Moldova would have only the party press or the press fully subordinate to politicians.</p> |
| <p>May 2018 Attacks against Veaceslav NEGRUȚA, expert at Transparency International Moldova</p> | <p>As a result of critical positions publicly exposed by Transparency International Moldova (TI-Moldova) regarding some public policy initiatives or draft laws, including the ideas of the authorities to reorganize some enterprises and agencies (March 2017), during 2017 and 2018, Veaceslav NEGRUȚA, an expert of TI-Moldova, and former Minister of Finance within the period of 2009-2013, has been the target of several denigrating articles. The attacks were mainly related to his alleged involvement in the tender on selection of the company to produce biometric passports when he held the office of the Minister of Finance. Several news portals have published false information, and it was the reason why Mr. Negruța complained to the courts. In June 2017, the newspaper "Timpul" (timpul.md portal), the author of one of such articles, was forced to publish a correction statement and apology for false information. Subsequently, Mesaj.md portal also came up with correction statement and public apology to Mr. Negruța. Other sources and means involved in the misinformation campaign (including the director of the PSA, deschide.md, today.md, prime.md, publika.md, Prime TV and Publika TV refused to publish correction statements and apologies, and are currently in the court proceedings started by Mr. Negruța for the protection of honour, dignity and business reputation (case initiated in June 2017).</p> <p>In May 2018 these attacks were relaunched. On 12 May 2018, news portals that publish articles favourable to the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM), Politics.md, Today.md, and Hotnews.md published quasi-identical articles on the arrest by the Anti-corruption Prosecutor's Office of Mr. Negruța's counsellor: „Former counsellor of the ex- minister of finance Negruța, arrested for falsifying tenders on passports purchase“.</p> <p>Note: At a press conference held on 14 May 2018, Mr. Negruța publicly denied any accusation and qualified the attack as a media lynching, related to his current activity within TI-Moldova and critics expressed with regard to several government initiatives (among them are laws on capital amnesty and conferment of citizenship through investment).</p> |
| <p>May – December 2018 General attacks with an emphasis on IPP and ADEPT</p> | <p>25 May 2018 - Publika TV station, affiliated to the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM), within the TV broadcast show „Principles” («Принципы»), presented by Andrei ANDRIEVSCHII, addressed the role of the NGOs in the Republic of Moldova. At the beginning of the TV show, the presenter rhetorically wonders how important they are and what role they play in the society, and whether they bring any benefit to the society in general.</p> <p>The invitee of the show Valeriu RENIȚA, an analyst, remarks in his intervention (minute 9:35) that there are <i>“elite NGOs that use huge financial resources and that always say they represent the civil society. These organizations influence the society and politics”</i>. The TV show presenter Andrei ANDRIEVSCHII supports further his initial statement: „<i>We will talk about what civil society organizations are busy with, and whether they deserve</i></p> |

to get involved in politics, as some of them do today“ (minute 12:10) and „what civil society does and why they „meddle“ into political life?“ (minute 12:40).

In the **report prepared for the show (minute 13:15)** it is mentioned: „there are also such representatives of civil society or non-governmental organizations that deal not only with public activities, but also with activities in favour of some political parties. These are the opinions expressed by the participants in a press club with the participation of the NGOs from Moldova and international ones“. Subsequently, the report presents an extract from a public intervention of two persons from the NGO sector. The report again quotes the **IMAS survey carried out at the end of 2017** at the order of the Democratic Party, where 73% of respondents would have said they did not trust the NGOs, they knew very little about the activity of the NGOs, they considered NGOs being involved in politics or dealing with money laundering.

Valeriu RENIȚĂ, analyst (minute 17:30): „I can give you a very good example of elitist organizations that are funded from abroad with very big sums of money. The non-governmental organization of Mr. Boțan and the non-governmental organization of Mr. Barbăroșie, which are well known and well-funded. They two together created the Party Dignity and Truth, if you remember it was initially a civic movement for people. Then the party was created, after which they did not hesitate to get politically involved, to provide instructions on television ... Why does the poll show that they do not represent the citizens' interests? Because they represent the interests of the organizations they are financed by. This is why I say that these organizations are busy with influencing political processes in an underhand way and they are keeping an eye on everything to be all right, as a particular outside organization desires.“

Note: The TV show presented above aims to denigrate the image of the CSOs. The moderator of the show has a partial role, being the one who addresses suggestive questions or gives his own conclusions about the subject of the discussion. Some participants in the show are making false statements about the activity of the Association for Participatory Democracy (ADEPT) and the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) and representatives of these organizations, Igor BOȚAN and Arcadie BARBĂROȘIE. The right of the NGOs to get involved in any activity, including public policy activities, is closely related to the exercising the right to freedom of expression, the right to association and assembly. The ability to carry out such activities is an expression of exercising these freedoms. There are a number of international and European standards regarding the possibility of the non-governmental sector to get involved in legislative changes or other advocacy actions. When draft laws that jeopardize the sustainability of the state or the rule of law are promoted, it is not only the right but also the duty of the NGOs to intervene. The survey by IMAS was analysed in the [Radiography of attacks on CSOs in 2017](#) and detailed explanation why it is an attack on the CSOs was provided (please see page 18 of the 2017 radiography).

9 July 2018 - Vladimir CEBOTARI, the vice-chairperson of the DPM, within the framework of TV broadcast „Punctul pe azi“(Today's Point) at TVR Moldova, said that the Institute for Public Policies (IPP), the author of the Barometer of Public Opinion, was actually an organization affiliated to the PAS Party, LDPM and PPDA (minute 14:00).

1 November 2018 - The media platform **Actual.md** has published an article entitled [„Civic Activism of the IPP brand: Flattering with the government institutions, using American money and accusing them of being captured by Plahotniuc“](#), which was republished on the same day by **at least three media portals that publish materials favourable to the DPM** – [Hotnews](#), [Evenimentul](#) and [AllMoldova](#). The article covers the project implemented by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP), [„Promoting community-focused law enforcement in Moldova“](#), which has a duration of three years and is financially supported by the United States State Department. It is mentioned in the article that within the framework of this project the IPP concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mayor’s office and Police Inspectorate of Leova. The author of the article, Ana-Elena CREANGĂ (pseudonym), asks herself: *„Does the money of the opposition come to an end or does greed takes no account of political colour?“* The article accuses the IPP of criticizing the authorities with which it afterwards collaborates using money received from foreign donors.

3 December 2018 - The online media portal **Telegraph.md**, which publishes materials favouring the DPM, published an article entitled [„The husband of a member of the Political Bureau of the PAS will present tomorrow an opinion poll“](#), in which it mentioned that the next day the IPP will present the opinion poll Barometer of Public Opinion (BOP). It is mentioned in the article that the President of the IPP Arcadie BARBĂROȘIE is the spouse of the member of the Political Bureau of the PAS (Daniela TERZI-BARBĂROȘIE), questioning the correctness of the survey results.

4 December 2018 - **at least 6 online media portals publishing materials favourable for the government** - [Actual](#), [Today](#), [Evenimentul](#), [Livenews](#) ([article 1](#), [article 2](#)), [Moldova24](#) ([article 1](#), [article 2](#), [article 3](#)) and [ȘtiridinMoldova](#), published the results of the BOP implemented by the order of the IPP. In the text of the news, they mentioned that the President of the IPP *„Arcadie Barbăroșie is the husband of Daniela Terzi, the member of the Political Bureau of the PAS. Barbăroșie participated in most of the protests organized by the PAS-PPDA binom, some of them even being emceed by him.“* **3 television stations affiliated to the DPM** - [PublikaTV](#), [PrimeTV](#), [Canal3](#) - have published similar news story about the results of the BOP, in which they made identical mentions about the president of the IPP. While presenting the opinion poll, **an online media portal that publishes materials favourable to the DPM**, [Telegraph](#), published a news story stating the same thing and emphasising that, *„therefore, the figures on citizens' trust in these political parties can be considered subjective from the very beginning“*.

4 December 2018 - **Eugen LUCHIANIUC, a blogger**, published an article entitled [„Why is jurnal.md keeps silent about the BOP opinion poll conducted by the IPP of Maya?“](#), in which he referred to the launch of the BOP opinion poll conducted by the IPP and presented by Arcadie BARBĂROȘIE, the President of the IPP; Igor BOȚAN, the President of the Association for Participatory Democracy ADEPT; Victor CIOBANU, political and economic commentator; Vasile CANTARJI and Ion JIGĂU, sociologists. He noted that the explanation for the title of the article is that *„3 out of 5 persons who have presented the Barometer of Public Opinion today are faithful supporters of Maia Sandu“*, suggesting

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| | <p>that the IPP would be affiliated to the Party „Action and Solidarity“ (PAS) led by Maia SANDU.</p> <p>Note: The CSOs have different methods of work in a democratic society. The criticism of some policies or measures of the state institutions by an NGO should not prevent collaboration with authorities when collaboration brings benefits to the country and its population. By strictly splitting of the NGOs into those that can only provide policy analyses and criticisms and others that can only collaborate with authorities, a culture that is dangerous for the development of society is being promoted, including by promoting the wrong perception that the NGOs that come with critics of some policies can no longer provide the necessary technical assistance in the interests of the country development.</p> <p>Daniela TERZI-BARBĂROȘIE published a post on social networks where she indicated that since September 2017 she was no longer a member of the National Political Bureau of the PAS and asked TV stations PublikaTV, PrimeTV and Canal3 not to publish false information about her and rectify the news. The news was not rectified.</p> |
| <p>May – November 2018</p> <p>Attempts to amend the legislation in order to limit the financing of Moldovan CSOs from abroad</p> | <p>3 May 2018 - Andrian CANDU, the President of the Parliament, the member of the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM), after passing the draft law on non-commercial organizations in the first reading, published a post on his Twitter account, stating that <i>„A new law on non-profit organizations was adopted in the first reading by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. The aim is to regulate a simplified rule of establishment and operation of the NGOs. There are still some challenges - inappropriate foreign donations aimed to influence the political system in Moldova should be forbidden“</i></p> <p>4 October 2018 - The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova published a press release announcing the adoption of a Decision on the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry to elucidate the factual and legal circumstances concerning the interference of the „Otwarty Dialog“ Foundation (Open Dialogue) and its founder Ludmila KOZLOWSKA in the internal affairs of the Republic of Moldova and concerning the financing of some political parties in the Republic of Moldova („Open Dialogue Commission“).</p> <p>On the same day, Andrian CANDU, the President of the Parliament and representative of the DPM fraction, posted a video on his Facebook page, with the description <i>„We want citizens of the Republic of Moldova to be the ones who choose and decide their fate, but not others by means of all types of foreign agencies, using instruments such as non-governmental organizations“</i>. In this video, Mr. Candu speaks at the session of the Parliament on the topic for which the Open Dialogue Commission was set up, in which he mentioned: <i>„We want citizens to be the ones who choose and decide their fate, but not others, through all types of foreign agencies, other countries, including by using tools like questionable NGOs. We are not talking about the NGOs that have been creating a certain reputation and name for decades, but we are talking about those that appear as mushrooms overnight, they work for a year or two years using money that is not known where it comes from and how it comes and, moreover, they influence politics in the Republic of Moldova and try to brainwash the public“</i>.</p> |

16 November 2018 - Igor VREMEA, the chairman of the Open Dialogue Commission and member of the Democratic Party of Moldova, presented the [report of the Commission](#) at the [session of the Parliament](#) (min. 13.00 - 1.04.00), while the Plenary of the Parliament approved the report by the vote of the majority governing coalition. The topic was not announced in advance and was placed on the [agenda](#) of the session in the morning of 16 November 2018. The investigation by the Commission lasted about 1.5 months, since 4 October 2018, when the Commission was set up, until 16 November 2018 when the report was presented.

The Open Dialogue Commission report states, inter alia, that the Political Party „Action and Solidarity Party“, the Political Party „Platform Dignity and Truth“ and their leaders benefited from illegal funding by the Polish Foundation „Otwarty Dialog“ and did not declare these funds in the corresponding way. Without providing a single example of the involvement of non-commercial organizations from Moldova in the actions described in the report, the Commission found an increasing active involvement of foreign public associations and domestic associations with foreign funding in direct and indirect financing of activities of the political parties and activities that influence political options. Although national legislation explicitly forbids non-commercial organizations to fund political parties, the Open Dialogue Commission has concluded that it is not sufficient.

On the same day, the Parliament adopted a [Decision concerning the Open Dialogue Commission report](#). The Parliament repeated the findings and recommendations provided by the Commission concerning non-commercial organizations. The Parliament has decided that the Government has to develop proposals to improve the legislation for to ensure financial transparency and eliminate gaps that allow illegal funding of political parties by non-commercial organizations. The Parliament will re-evaluate all legislative initiatives and draft laws that refer to the activity and funding of political parties and public associations in order to eliminate the risks to state security. In addition, the Parliament has indicated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration shall bring to the attention of the diplomatic corps and international organizations active in the Republic of Moldova the legal provisions imposing imperative restrictions on the direct and indirect financing of political parties, including through non-commercial organizations.

Note 1: The current legislation of the Republic of Moldova expressly stipulates that non-commercial organizations of the Republic of Moldova cannot finance political parties. This is also expressly mentioned in the report by the Open Dialogue Commission with reference to the relevant legislation. And [the draft law on non-commercial organizations](#), adopted in the first reading, prohibits the funding of political parties by non-commercial organizations. The Open Dialogue Commission report has never mentioned the involvement of non-commercial organizations from Moldova in the actions described in the report concerning the direct or indirect funding of political parties. Under these circumstances, it is not clear why the Commission has concluded that there has been „an increasing active involvement of ... the domestic public associations with foreign funding in direct and indirect financing of activities of the

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| | <p><i>political parties</i>“. Also, it is unclear why it is necessary to review the current legislation on non-commercial organizations to avoid involvement in the funding of political parties, if both current legislation and legislative initiatives prohibit the funding of political parties by NGOs. It is also surprising that the report by the Commission does not refer to the activity of the CSOs of the Republic of Moldova, but refers to the activity of foreign CSOs. In fact, the explicit mentioning in the conclusions of the report by the Commission of non-commercial organizations with foreign funding, without stating concrete examples, denotes the intention of the authorities to limit foreign financing of the CSOs from Moldova and the Open Dialogue Commission report was just a pretext in this regard, lacking any legal and factual ground.</p> <p>The statements of the Speaker Candu and the recommendation of the Open Dialogue Commission and the Parliament to amend the legislation on non-commercial organizations in order to limit foreign influence on Moldovan politics are not the first attempts to limit the financing of Moldovan CSOs from abroad. In the summer of 2017, the then Minister of Justice and the MP of the DPM Vladimir CEBOTARI initiated a project to limit the external financing of the CSOs that promote/monitor public policies. About 80% of all funding sources for the NGOs of Moldova comes from abroad. The initiative was blocked in September 2018 (see details in the Radiography of attacks on non-governmental organizations in the Republic of Moldova (September 2016-December 2017)), but it seems that this idea has not been abandoned definitively.</p> <p>Note 2: In this document, we have focused strictly on the subject concerning the environment for the activity of the CSOs, while other major gaps and issues in the Open Dialogue report have not been included in this document.</p> |
| <p>29 June 2018 Statement by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in Moldova</p> | <p>25-29 June 2018 - Michel FORST, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, paid a visit to the Republic of Moldova. Mr. Forst had meetings with both authorities, members of the diplomatic institutions and over 110 human rights defenders on both sides of the Dniester River. At the end of the visit, he made a statement concerning the preliminary conclusions and recommendations.</p> <p>Mr. Forst noted that public authorities of Moldova have stigmatized, sometimes accused and discredited human rights defenders and their work, including through the media. He received statements about intimidation and threats expressed towards human rights defenders by public officials with regard to their activity in the domain of human rights, especially when they criticised the decisions taken by the Government. Mr. Forst noted that the CSOs stated that their contributions were not examined de facto and that they had difficulties in conducting dialogue with civil servants as concerns their advocacy activities. Mr. Forst also mentioned that civil society stated it had no practical tools to influence the decision-making process. The process of policy development and implementation is often not inclusive and transparent. The principles of participation and responsibility are not a part of the interaction between the authorities and human rights defenders.</p> <p>The UN Special Rapporteur noted that in the Transnistrian region, the legislation on non-profit organizations caused serious concerns, especially the introduction of restrictions</p> |

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| | <p>on advocacy activities that have been defined as „political activities“, which was not in line with international standards. Mr. Forst noted that human rights defenders sometimes did not feel that they operated in a safe and permissive environment.</p> <p>The UN Special Rapporteur urged the Parliament to approve a law on the NGOs that would respect international human rights standards without substantial changes to the draft submitted by the Government and to discuss with the civil society organizations and agree upon any new amendment; called on the State authorities to develop provisions and practices to ensure the plenary participation of the civil society in decision-making at central and local level, to strengthen mass media and civil society access to the information on high profile lawsuits, as well as to the information of public interest.</p> |
| <p>July – November 2018</p> <p>Attacks related to the failure of the judiciary reform</p> | <p>6 July 2018 - Ambassador of the European Union (EU) and ambassadors of the EU member states to Chisinau met with the Prime Minister Pavel FILIP and the members of the Government to inform them of the EU position after the invalidation of elections in Chisinau municipality and the political crisis in the Republic of Moldova, and the Resolution of the European Parliament as of 5 July 2018 suspending the payment of the first instalment of macro-financial assistance and budgetary assistance. After the meeting, the Delegation published a press release in which it also mentioned the need to guarantee the reform of the judiciary.</p> <p>7 July 2018 - the Government published a press release with its own comments on the meeting as of 6 July. According to the press release, the resolution as of 5 July 2018, was wrongful to the Government and politically charged, noting that „[...] all commitments for to receive the EU funding have been fulfilled, and the decision to suspend funding is unjustified and represents an interference in the domestic policy of the Republic of Moldova“. It is mentioned in the press release that the Prime Minister has brought to notice of the ambassadors of the EU countries that „if things still are not going as they have to in the justice sector, it is the responsibility of both the Government and the European partners, as well as the representatives of civil society who have participated in the implementation of the judiciary reform“. The Prime Minister also stated that the information sent by the EU Delegation to Chisinau to the European officials was incomplete and requested that „this approach should be reviewed and the messages sent should be objective “.</p> <p>Note: On 11 July 2018, several member organizations of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum published a statement declaring that only the government and the judiciary are responsible for the failures in justice sector. The signatory organizations expressed their concern and indignation about the way in which the Government had chosen to react, the unprecedented language used by a high-ranking official of the Republic of Moldova, and the failure of the Government to take responsibility for the state of affairs in the judiciary and shifting the responsibility for failure to reform the judiciary to the development partners and civil society.</p> <p>14 November 2018 - Bogdan ȚIRDEA, the MP, member of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), signed an article in aif.md, entitled „Закрытая каста“</p> |

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| | <p>(„Private caste“), dedicated to the so called „failure of the judiciary reform“. The author retrospectively comments on the efforts of the authorities regarding the elaboration of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy for 2011-2016 and the fact that the entire process was controlled by the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova, with the support of the Western partners. At the same time the article mentions the major role that some NGOs would have played in the reform of the judiciary and the fact that some „grant-eating“ NGOs monopolized the reform of justice. Țirdea was accusing the NGOs involved in the judiciary reform of gaining millions at the account of the reform of the judiciary.</p> <p>Bogdan ȚIRDEA concludes that civil society organizations are responsible for the failure of the judiciary reforms alongside with the Government. Țirdea noted the activity of some CSOs that would have obtained enormous sources of money and have enriched at the expense of the judiciary reform. Țirdea calls the representatives of the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM), the Institute for Penal Reform (IRP) and Promo-LEX the "civil society barons" and publishes information on the budgets of the implemented projects. In the case of the LRCM, Bogdan Tirdea says the organization has „drained“ more than 3 million dollars. Similar charges are also brought to the IRP for which the amount would be of at least 1.6 million dollars and Promo-LEX Association - 1.1 million dollars.</p> <p>15 November 2018 - Mr. Țirdea's article was republished by on-line news portals allmoldova.com and vesti.md</p> <p>Note: The statements of the MP of the PSRM Bogdan ȚIRDEA represent serious accusations against the CSOs. The numbers used do not correspond to the truth. The aforementioned CSOs operate strictly within the statutory and budgetary limits. All the information on the activities carried out, the budgets of the projects are publicly available on the web pages of the associations. Associations report regularly to the state bodies on tax obligations and other obligations. Activity reports of the associations are publicly available on the websites of the LRCM, Promo-LEX and IRP.</p> |
| <p>24-26 July 2018 Attacks on behalf of Ilan ȘOR, mayor of Orhei town and the president of the Political Party "Șor"</p> | <p>24 July 2018 - some human rights NGOs have published a public statement condemning the hate speech and threats made on 20 July 2018 by Ilan ȘOR, Mayor of Orhei and the president of the Political Party "Șor", to the address of journalists and some political opponents. Human rights NGOs have declared their solidarity with a similar statement previously made by media NGOs. On the same day, the Ombudsman published a press release on the inadmissibility of Ilan ȘOR's hate speech and informed that he had notified the Prosecutor General's Office on his statements. Regretfully, the Prosecutor General's Office refused to start criminal prosecution against Ilan ȘOR for these statements on the grounds that the actions committed by him were not qualified by the criminal law as an offence.</p> <p>26 July 2018 - Ilan ȘOR, Mayor of Orhei and the president of the Political Party "Șor" published on the social network Facebook a video message to the human rights NGOs. He argued that 98% of NGOs are composed of scammers, because when some politicians attacked him and other people affiliated to him, they had no reaction, suggesting that they would only work for money. Mr. Șor also mentioned that NGOs</p> |

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| | <p>receive a lot of money but do not pay taxes to the state budget and that many NGOs would illegally receive money from Vladimir FILAT, which could be discovered by the search done by the Prosecutor's Office at his suggestion. Mr. Șor pointed out that when he would be in power, he would adopt a law on foreign agents and the activity of NGOs active in the domain of human rights would be declared illegal and would be stopped. Ilan ȘOR urged the NGOs to publish reports on their donors and the amounts received from them.</p> <p>Note: NGOs in the Republic of Moldova, like any other employer who pays salary to the employees, pay the following payments to the state budget: (1) income tax for natural persons in the amount of 12% of taxable income, (2) compulsory health insurance premiums in the form of a percentage contribution from the salary and other rewards, paid by the employers and employees in the amount of 9% and (3) individual compulsory state social insurance contributions in the amount of 6% and compulsory state social insurance contributions paid by employers in the amount of 18%. The NGOs submit monthly report on the deduction of income tax, obligatory health insurance premiums and calculated obligatory state social insurance contributions. In this way, the State Tax Service has all the information about the payments made by the NGOs to the state budget. In addition to it, the NGOs annually submit to the State Tax Service information on the total amount of revenues and expenditures, and to the National Bureau of Statistics - a statistical report indicating also the sources of financing. The NGOs may be exempted from income tax, if they meet the requirements specified in Art. 52 of the Tax Code. Also, under art. 30¹ of the Law on Public Associations, the NGOs that have or want to obtain the status of public utility, must annually submit to the state bodies the activity report and the financial report.</p> |
| <p>July 2018 Attacks on NGOs and the donor community after criticizing the adoption of the capital amnesty law</p> | <p>26 July 2018 - The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted the Law on voluntary declaration and tax incentives. A group of NGOs has published a position paper criticizing the adoption of this law, as it would essentially represent a new attempt to amnesty the capital obtained from dubious sources. The NGOs have pointed out that the law was adopted contrary to the recommendations of the IMF and the World Bank; that it was adopted in both readings within very short period of time, just in two days, and in the absence of public consultations; that no impact analysis of the law has been made; that the proposed reform implied major risks of negative social impact and stimulation of the increase in tax exemption; that a similar draft was proposed in 2016, but was strongly criticized by both civil society and international organizations and was withdrawn from the agenda of the Parliament at the beginning of 2017.</p> <p>30 July 2018 - Media platform Actual.md, which publishes articles favourable to the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM), published an article entitled „Donors censure NGOs - organizations that supported „small tax reform“ have been cut funds“, republished on the same day by the on-line portal Moldova24. The author of the article, which publishes her articles under the pseudonym Ana-Elena CREANGĂ, stressed that several NGOs were deprived of funds after voicing their positive or neutral messages about the „small tax reform“ promoted by the Government. These NGOs would have been notified by donors that the way they had spent the money received previously</p> |

would be checked. The article mentions that donors dictate to the NGOs what initiatives to support and transmit to them ideas to be promoted in public space. The article did not refer to any NGO or donor organization, did not quote the statements of any person or organization.

31 July 2018 - The on-line media platform Actual.md has published an article written by the same author, entitled „[Incendiary disclosures: how the money allocated for the so-called civil society of Moldova reaches the money-boxes of the PAS, LDPM and PPDA](#)“, which was republished on the same day by **at least 7 media portals publishing materials favourable to the DPM** - [Moldova24](#), [Evenimentul](#), [Hotnews](#), [Telegraph](#), [StiridinMoldova](#), [Livenews](#) and [Politics](#) with similar headings. The article states that donors would have cut off the funds for NGOs that publicly express their support for some government projects and that do not respond positively to public messages from political parties such as the Party „Action and Solidarity“ (PAS), the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (LDPM) or the Political Party „Platform Dignity and Truth“ (PPDA). The article also noted that NGOs are imposed to support public appeals generated by some informal „leaders“, otherwise they are introduced by donors into a „blacklist“. The article indicated that there is a number of NGOs that are paid to lobby for obstructing of some initiatives of the Government or promoting projects favourable to the extra-parliamentary opposition. The article highlighted that one of these NGOs is the Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM).

1 August 2018 - The online media platform Actual.md has published an article entitled „[Indisputable evidence of the link between the NGOs and the political sector: a program coordinator from Amnesty promotes her husband's party](#)“, which was republished on the same day by **at least 3 media portals publishing materials favourable to the DPM** - [StiridinMoldova](#), [Moldova24](#) and [Politics](#) with identical or similar headings. The article is also signed by Ana-Elena CREANGĂ (pseudonym). She mentions that the employee of the Amnesty International Moldova, Violeta TERGUȚĂ, is the wife of the MP from the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (LDPM), Ion TERGUȚĂ, and that this demonstrates a link between the associative and the political sectors. It is mentioned in the article that Mrs. Terguță promotes public messages in support of the LDPM, the article also encloses a picture of Mrs. Terguță's post by which she distributed a request from the Amnesty International Moldova to the authorities to respect the rights of peaceful protesters and that has no connection with the LDPM. The article then referred to articles published two days earlier that concern the fact that donors would have persecuted the NGOs that do not criticize initiatives of the Government and that they are paying to some NGOs for to lobby against some initiatives of the Government. As in the other two articles, the author did not quote any sources.

Note: These series of denigrating articles targeting CSOs and the donor community immediately after the criticism of a draft law adopted by the government expressed by international organizations and national CSOs, failure to provide any sources or opinions of those organizations in question, the simultaneous republication of identic articles with insignificant change of headings from several media sources that publish articles

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| | favourable to the government, indicates that this is an orchestrated attack on organizations that have criticized the actions of the government. |
| <p>August 2018 Attacks in the context of the criticism expressed by the CSOs concerning the law on granting citizenship of the RM through investment</p> | <p>Several news portals publishing articles favourable to the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM) - Moldova24.info, Actual.md, Timpul.md, Evenimentul.md, Hotnews.md - have published an article entitled „Programme on citizenship acquisition through investment and hysteria of Moldovan „civil society“ performed at the order“.</p> <p>The content of the articles is the same, except for the headings, which slightly differ. The article refers to the Citizenship Acquisition Program launched in late August 2018 in Montenegro, as well as to the fact that a similar program exists in the Republic of Moldova. The text of the articles does not refer to the statements of any CSO or representative of the CSOs of Moldova, contrary to the content of the heading. At the end the articles characterize the CSOs as „<i>an army of „internal moles“ whose principle is: „the worse it is for the country, the better it is for us</i>“.</p> <p>Note: The simultaneous publication of these articles demonstrates an orchestrated character of the intention to form public opinion. The included articles represent a sequence of unfounded accusations, without indicating sources or journalistic research, the heading does not correspond to the content of the article, which clearly points to a single intention: denigration of civil society organizations that criticize policies that in their view are contrary to the public interests in the Republic Moldova or endanger the security of the state.</p> |
| <p>August 2018 Attacks against Rosian VASILOI, security expert, IDIS Viitorul</p> | <p>16 August 2018 - the news portal zeppelin.md publishes a video investigation presenting several false statements attributed to Mr. Rosian Vasiloï, a security policy expert at the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) „<i>Viitorul</i>“. Among the provided information would be the fact that Mr. Vasiloï would be a KGB agent and, together with the banker convicted in the bank fraud case, Veaceslav PLATON, would work in the interests of the Russian Federation. Subsequently, the author of the investigation suggests the connection of Mr. Vasiloï with Vladimir FILAT, the former Prime Minister, as well as with the member of the party Dignity and Truth, Gheorghe PETIC. According to the investigation, both Vasiloï and Gheorghe PETIC had received the order <i>to infiltrate into the civil society</i>.</p> <p>17 August 2018 - The on-line media platform Actual.md, Today.md and Telegraph.md republish the investigation by zeppelin.md under the following headings: Actual.md „Incendiary! Investigation that blows up Moldovan politics! Terrifying connections between a former important person from Filat Government with the KGB!“; Today.md „Disclosures of the Zeppelin brand Incendiary pages from the KGB-file of „security expert“ Rosian Vasiloï“; Telegraph.md „Coincidence ?! The maiden name of Rosian Vasiloï's wife was Platon, just like that of his colleague at KGB school - Veaceslav Platon!“. Articles with similar headings and content appeared on the same day including on the portals: Prime.md, Canal2.md, Canal3.md, vesti.md, 10tv.</p> <p>All the articles have similar content and reproduce the entire or part of the zeppelin.md so-called investigation. In addition, the articles mention that „...<i>Moldovan civil society</i>“</p> |

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| | <p>would have been penetrated by former Soviet KGB agents, who have put on a „pro-European“ mask“.</p> <p>Rosian VASILOI refuted the accusations, qualifying them as unfounded and coming from unscrupulous sources of information. The alleged investigation comes after the latter previously made several statements about smuggling of cigarettes over the Prut river and after he declared that the smuggling was done under the protection of high-ranking officials. Mr. Vasiloï expressed concern that the authors of the investigation also had access to personal data that could only be held by the state authorities.</p> <p>23 August 2018 - TV station Publika TV, affiliated to the Democratic Party of Moldova, within the framework of TV broadcast „Fabrika“, anchored by Cristi TABĂRĂ takes the subject of zeppelin.md investigation and discusses with the invitees to the studio the alleged influence of the KGB in Moldova, especially the case of Rosian Vasiloï. The connection between Vladimir FILAT, Veaceslav PLATON and representatives of civil society is repeatedly mentioned in TV broadcast.</p> <p>Note: The publication of identical news, with only slight modification of the heading, denotes the concerted nature of the aforementioned publications. The purpose of the publication seems to be influence on public opinion by negative presentation of the activity of the CSO/representatives of a CSO. Taken as a whole, the publication aims rather at discrediting the image of the civil society organisations than at informing the readers as well as at intimidation of a CSO representative.</p> |
| <p>October 2018 Institutional and media lynching of Amnesty International-Moldova</p> | <p>18 October 2018 - Amnesty International-Moldova (AIM or Amnesty) held a press conference regarding the detention and forced deportation to Turkey of seven Turkish citizens, employees of the private Lyceum network „Orizont“. Alongside with several NGOs, relatives of the deported persons, as well as representatives of the lyceum, a group of young activists and volunteers from Amnesty attended this press conference. Amnesty activists and volunteers also carried out a theatrical protest in which some volunteers wore balaclava face masks and ropes on their necks to illustrate the potential danger to Turkish citizens who were kidnapped by the authorities. At this conference several NGOs, including the Amnesty International-Moldova, have requested by a declaration the leadership of the Republic of Moldova to ask the Turkish President to return back all Turkish citizens illegally expelled by Moldovan authorities.</p> <p>Following the press conference, the Amnesty International Moldova employees and activists became the target of a media attack and harassment by pro-government TV stations and politicians. A big number of reports and media articles with tendentious headings have been published within the following days. They have covered the press conference in a distorted way. In a video report by the media station Publika.TV, the press conference and costumed protest of the Amnesty are presented under the heading „Pupils „hanged“ by Amnesty“.</p> <p>Another big part of articles suggests that AIM would be affiliated to the leader of the Party „Action and Solidarity“, Maia SANDU:</p> |

19 October 2018 - Publika.md has published an article entitled „Horrible! An NGO closely associated with Maia Sandu imposed several children from a lyceum of the capital to stay with a rope on their necks“. Subsequently, news portals Telgraph.md, Prime.md, Timpul.md, Canal3, Moldova24, Noi.md, Apărătorul.md republished and broadcasted similar news. At the same time, Publika TV and Prime TV teams began to physically follow employees, volunteers and activists of the Amnesty (both in the office and outside of it) and repeatedly tried to enter the offices of the Amnesty uninvited.

30 October 2018 - Corneliu GANDRABUR, a blogger, published a denigrating article to the address of the Amnesty. The blogger has accused the organization, among other things, of the lack of transparency for their refusal to talk to some journalists, and that the purpose of the organization activity is just to get money from dozens of donors.

1 November 2018 - At the session of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Sergiu SÎRBU, MP and vice-president of the DPM, made several statements regarding the Amnesty case (minute 54:50). He described Amnesty International Moldova organization as a dubious organization that would use children against their will. Mr. Sîrbu urged the Ombudsman for Children's Rights, Maia BĂNĂRESCU, to intervene in this case and requested her questioning by the Parliament. Within a short period of time (about an hour) since the request of the MP Sîrbu, Mrs. Bănărescu came to the Parliament to offer explanations (see also the minutes of the Parliament session as of 1 November 2018, p. 61 – 89). In her speech Maia BĂNĂRESCU (minute 2:02:01) proposed, inter alia, the introduction of some criminal sanctions for „involvement“ of children in political activities and expressed regret that such sanctions do not currently exist. Other MPs from the Socialist Party also condemned the involvement of minors in civic activity in the case of Amnesty. The session of the Parliament ended with a proposal to introduce legislative amendments that would prohibit the participation of minors in public events.

After the session of the Parliament, the Ombudsman for Children’s Rights published a press release regarding the hearing, in which she also stated that she „advocates for the improvement of the legal framework regarding the involvement of children in the activities carried out by adults, including the actions of political parties“. Shortly after, a written opinion on the event organized by the Amnesty International Moldova on 18 October 2018 was also published on the official website of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman for Children’s Rights stated, inter alia, that she advocates for the improvement of the legal framework regarding the involvement of children in the activities carried out by adults, including the actions of political parties.

Note: On 19 October 2018, Amnesty International - Moldova (AIM) published a statement stating that the action (the press conference and the costumed protest) had a peaceful and non-political nature. AIM specified that the entire media lynching campaign came up after the AIM criticized the authorities for kidnapping of Turkish citizens on 6 September.

The intervention of the MP Sîrbu, by which he labelled the AIM activity as dubious, is similar to the attacks launched previously by the media publications and has no factual grounds. Amnesty International is a global network recognized in over 150 countries

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| | <p>with the experience in promoting human rights, including those of the minors, proven over the years. The intervention of Ombudsman for Children’s Rights, Maia BĂNĂRESCU, at the session of the Parliament shortly after the MP Sîrbu requested her hearing, having a report on the subject for which she was summoned already drafted, denotes the existence of a prior understanding or political influence on the Ombudsman, or it seems that Maia BĂNĂRESCU knew in advance about the necessity of her coming to the Plenary of the Parliament. The proposal of the Ombudsman for Children’s Rights to introduce criminal sanctions for the involvement of children in political activities, as well as the proposal expressed in the Plenary of the Parliament to introduce legislative amendments that would prohibit the participation of minors in public events, represent an abusive restriction of the rights of young people. If amendments prohibiting the participation of minors in public events are introduced, they would cancel the adolescents’ right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and would sent a worrying signal to the entire society of Moldova.</p> <p>Note2: On December 24, 2018, the Press Council issued a decision on the Amnesty case, in which they stated inter alia that Publika TV, Prime TV, Canal 3 and Telegraph.md had unilaterally and disproportionately reflected the conference a press release organized by several non-governmental organizations, with allegations of political partisanship being presented without evidence, deliberately omitted relevant information in the material, statements were made without factual coverage, no clear distinction between facts and opinions , and the authors failed to provide the right to reply in the broadcast / published material. The Press Council concluded a violation of the provisions of the Moldovan Journalist's Code of Ethics, in the part referring to the accuracy and treatment of information, the presentation and argumentation of the opinions.</p> |
| <p>6 December 2018</p> | <p>The on-line portal Hotnews.md published an article, republished on the same day by Actual.md, regarding the denigrating statements towards the civil society organizations by Sergiu MOCANU, the Head of the Antimafia Political Movement. Mr. Mocanu stated that the Moldovan civil society is not independent, and a part of it would be directly subordinated to the interests of Moscow, and also that the civil society benefited from the heavy money of the former Prime Minister Vladimir FILAT. The article does not refer to specific sources or organizations. The simultaneous publication of these articles demonstrates an orchestrated character of the intention to form public opinion.</p> |
| <p>December 2018 Attacks on the NGOs in the context of the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova</p> | <p>7 December 2018 - The Democratic Party of Moldova has published a press release entitled „<i>The DPM notes several shortfalls as regards the violation by some parties and civic organizations of the Law on Political Parties, of the Electoral Code and of the Broadcasting Code</i>“. The press release states that: „3. A number of public associations are becoming more and more actively and openly involved in illegal campaigns on political promotion of some potential electoral competitors, and the worst thing is that they are financed from external sources, which is categorically prohibited by the law. We are dealing with a hidden financing of electoral actions by the external money. All these illegal actions are to be documented and submitted to the competent institutions“ There was no indication in the press release to which actions or which organizations they refer</p> |

to. The press release was republished by at least 5 publications, web portals and TV stations, and namely [Publica TV](#), [Timpul](#), [Realitatea](#), [Stiri.md](#) and [Radio Chisinau](#).

Note: The CSOs members of the National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum adopted a [statement](#) at the 10th Annual Meeting of the Forum. They mentioned that the accusations of the DPM are probably related to the International Conference „[Joining Efforts Against Impunity and Political Corruption](#)“, organized by Transparency International Moldova on 4 December 2018, with the participation of nine political parties (left, centre and right wings). Signatory organizations have pointed out that this was an example of denigrating the CSOs.

28 December 2018 - The Democratic Party of Moldova published a press release entitled „[DPM rejects falsehoods stated by Promo-LEX in connection with the electoral process](#)“, signed by **Vladimir CEBOTARI, deputy chairman and the head of the DPM electoral staff**. The press release referred to [report no. 1 of the Parliamentary Election Observation Mission as of 24 February 2019](#), published by the Promo-LEX Association. The DPM accused Promo-LEX of lack of professionalism in drafting of the report, including the lack of objective methodology and analysis. The DPM also „*categorically rejected the allegations on the use of administrative resources by the DPM simply because the Parliament and the Government adopted various social measures in the last months*“.

Note: On 29 December 2019, Promo-LEX Association published a press release entitled „[Promo-LEX considers unfounded the accusations of the Democratic Party of Moldova towards the Promo-LEX Observation Mission](#)“. Promo-LEX qualified the position of the DPM as „*an impulsive response that can be framed within the limits of freedom of expression and the right to opinion*“. At the same time, Promo-LEX stressed that it wanted to believe „*that this reaction has nothing in common with and does not pursue the intention of intimidating the observers in any way*“. The Association noted that election observation reports aim to inform the public impartially and equidistantly about the observers' findings regarding the performance of all actors involved in the electoral process, regardless of the position they hold. The Association recalled that the activity of the Observation Mission of Promo-LEX is based on a Methodology elaborated on the basis of international standards in the domain and which is applied uniformly for the observation of elections in Moldova since 2009 and the methodological tools used are described in the introductory section of the monitoring reports. The observers' reports shall, as far as possible, be accompanied by official information and other evidence, including photo and video, which may only be made available to law enforcement bodies on the basis of appropriate requests and in no case to the electoral candidates. Promo-LEX also noted that in the case of the report referred to in the DPM press release, the findings „*concerning the performance of this party are accompanied by footnotes, which direct the reader to official information and other evidence, which inexplicably for us were disregarded by the DPM. We tend to think that this disregard is not intentional, and it is just an omission due to lack of attention*“.

11 December 2018 - Publika.TV, a TV station affiliated to the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM), held a discussion on the initiative to sign the code of conduct drafted

by the CEC and the BCC in the context of the parliamentary elections. The anchor of [TV broadcast „Fabrika“](#) **Cristi TABĂRA** said that „*media NGOs cry with all might that their rights are violated [...] but they themselves violate the most basic rules of deontology, do not make any delimitation between the pamphlet and attacks on a person*“ (**minute 22:18**). The invitee to the broadcast, **MP of the DPM Corneliu MIHALACHE** stated that „*NGOs are instruments of political war, they are not equidistant as they determine themselves and their statements denote an obvious political commitment*“ (**minute 23:55**).

Note: The broadcast aims to denigrate the image of the civil society organizations. The presenter of the show has a partial role, being the one who addresses suggestive questions or gives his own conclusions about the subject of the discussion in violation of journalistic ethics. The speaker is a representative of the ruling party who uses any means to discredit any critical opinions on the policies and conduct of the Party members of which he is a part (DPM).

The following day, Publika.md published a report entitled „[The reason why opposition parties and NGOs associated with them will refuse to sign the code of conduct elaborated by the CEC and the BCC](#)“ based on statements given within the framework of "Fabrika" broadcast on the same subject as of 11 December 2018. The report states that, according to the DPM spokesman Vitalie GĂMURARI, and the MP of the DPM Corneliu MIHALACHE, „*The opposition parties and NGOs associated with them will refuse to sign the code of conduct elaborated by the CEC and the BCC on the reason that the document was proposed by the ruling Democratic Party*“. The report did not mention which these NGOs are and why they are considered to be affiliated to some political parties.

SIGNATORY ORGANISATIONS:



The Legal Resources Centre from Moldova (LRCM) is a think tank with vast experience in analysing the activity and reforming the justice sector, promoting human rights and reforms for an environment favourable to civil society organizations. More information can be found at www.crjm.org.



Amnesty International Moldova is a part of global human rights protection movement Amnesty International. The activity of the organization is based on the decisions voted by its members at the General Assembly. AIM participates in global and local campaigns, and currently carries out the activity on Education for HR in schools as well as for law professionals. More information can be found at www.amnesty.md.



P.A. WatchDog.MD community is a young think-tank from the Republic of Moldova. The community brings together experts in various areas of major importance, qualified to develop and evaluate sectoral public policies. The objectives of the organization are to enhance the role of civil society in public policy making and to inform the general public and interested institutions on the real situation in the Republic of Moldova in important areas such as economy, public finance, democracy, electoral processes, and human rights. More information can be found at www.watchdog.md.



Transparency International-Moldova (TI-Moldova) was registered as a national branch office of the world anti-corruption organization Transparency International on 14 June 2000. The mission of TI-Moldova is to promote transparency, integrity and accountability as the main ways of preventing corruption and improving the quality of governance. More information can be found at www.transparency.md.



Institute for Development and Social Initiatives „Viitorul” (IDIS) is an independent think tank, carrying out research and advocacy. IDIS successfully combines social, political and economic research with recognised advocacy components. It conducts field research in the domain of political science and economic analysis, governance and law, maintaining a range of social networks on social policy analysis, decentralization, EU and Russia policies, frozen conflicts and trade. More information can be found at www.viitorul.org.



The Institute for Public Policy (IPP) is a non-political and non-profit organization. Its purpose is to contribute to the development of the Republic of Moldova in the spirit of an open, participatory and pluralistic society, committed to democratic values. More information can be found at www.ipp.md.



Promo - LEX

Promovarea democrației și a drepturilor omului



The Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) is one of the first non-governmental media organizations in the Republic of Moldova. Founded in 1994, the organization has the mission to contribute to the consolidation of a free and viable press through assistance to independent media and journalists through trainings in journalism and public relations, by media campaigns, advocacy, research and media education. More information can be found at www.media-azi.md.

Promo-LEX Association is a non-governmental organization aimed at promoting democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including in the Transnistrian region, by promoting and defending human rights, monitoring democratic processes and strengthening the civil society. More information can be found at www.promolex.md.

The Association of Independent Press (API) is one of the most important media organizations in the Republic of Moldova that promotes and helps independent media and non-political journalists. API promotes the principles of free press and contributes to the development of open society in the Republic of Moldova. More information can be found at www.api.md.

The Association for Efficient and Responsible Governance (AGER) is a public association whose main purpose is the general promotion of good governance through consultancy and political reform in public administration. More information can be found at www.ager.md.

Soros Foundation - Moldova (FSM) was established in 1992 by philanthropist George Soros, Soros Foundation-Moldova is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political organization that aims to promote the values of an open society in the Republic of Moldova. The Foundation supports various initiatives of natural persons and legal entities in the following areas, but not limited to: justice and human rights, good governance, the media and public health. More information can be found at: <http://soros.md>.

The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IEPR) is an independent think tank that aims to accelerate the European integration process of the Republic of Moldova by monitoring and promoting public policies aimed to contribute to the implementation of systemic reforms, increase of participatory democracy and strengthening of the role of citizens in decision-making processes at national and local level. More information can be found at www.ipre.md.

The Independent Analytical Centre EXPERT-GRUP is an analytical centre specialized in economic and public policy research. Being an independent organization, Expert-Grup is a reflection of the ideals shared by young Moldovan intellectuals who created the institution in order to contribute to the development of the country. The organization is positioned as a politically and ideologically neutral analytical centre and does not represent economic, corporate or



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political interests. Expert-Grup was founded in 1998 and started the research activity in 2006. More information can be found at www.expert-grup.org/ro.

The Centre for Investigative Journalism is a non-governmental organization established in 2003. The main activity of the Centre is aimed at improving the quality of investigative journalism in the Republic of Moldova, strengthening the capacity of investigative journalists, promoting the best methods and techniques for investigative journalism, as well as conducting public awareness campaigns. More information can be found at www.investigatii.md.

The Association of Independent TV Journalists from Moldova (ATVJI) is a non-governmental organization founded in 1995 by a team of freelance journalists. The organization was created as a response to the pressures that were made at that time on journalists in the domain of broadcasting due to political implications in the management of the few TV and radio stations in the Republic of Moldova. Subsequently, the association has specialized in providing legal assistance to TV and radio reporters being under pressure or abusively dismissed from office, as well as in identifying professional opportunities for abusively dismissed journalists. More information can be found at: www.reporterdegarda.md.

The East European Foundation was registered at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova on 3 November 2009 and is the successor of the Eurasia Foundation (FE) in Moldova. The new organization continues the work of the Eurasia Foundation, which since 1994 has contributed to the promotion of democracy, human rights and market economy and has supported the development of civil society, the media and the transparency of the public administration activity in the country. The mission of the Eastern European Foundation is to empower the citizens of the Republic of Moldova with capabilities and means to ensure sustainable development through education and technical assistance programs that promote democracy, good governance and economic prosperity. More information can be found at www.eef.md.

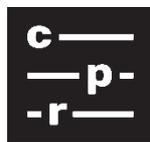
Centre "Partnership for Development" was created in 1998. The National Women's Studies and Information Centre „Partnership for Development“ (CPD) is a public institution that aims to contribute to the promotion of an integrative approach to gender issues, women's rights and equal opportunities for men and women. CPD advocates for the implementation of the concept of gender equality in all areas of life, for the promotion of public policies in the domain, addressing the issues of women's role in society and their empowerment, for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and it is also a documentation, information and training centre for the NGOs active in this domain and initiative groups. More information can be found at www.progen.md.



The Association for Participatory Democracy „ADEPT“ is an independent centre for analysis and consultancy regarding the decisional, political, electoral and socio-economic processes in the Republic of Moldova and in the region. The mission of ADEPT is to promote democratic values and to support the active participation of citizens in public life. More information can be found at <http://www.e-democracy.md/adept/>.



Center for Health Policies and Studies (PAS Center) is an independent, nonprofit, apolitical Moldovan organization. The mission of the PAS Center is to build a democratic society by improving and developing the health and social sector, promoting and assessing policies, strengthening capacities and supporting reforms. More information is available at www.pas.md.



CPR Moldova – „Reforms should be seen in real life, not on paper or television.” More information is available at www.cpr.md.



Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims “Memoria” is a unique center in Moldova that offers comprehensive information and support to victims of torture, victims of gender-based violence and to Moldovan citizens as well as to refugees and asylum seekers in Moldova. We help people who experienced violence at any point in their lives. Whenever it happened, whatever the circumstances, we will give you the support that you need. Our services are provided by a multidisciplinary team of professionals: psychologists, psychotherapists, doctors, social assistants, and legal advisers. More information is available at: www.memoria.md.

The list of signatory organizations remains open