

8 October 2018

**Statement by Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
Following a Visit to Chisinau, Moldova on 2-5 October 2018**

The Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership expresses its solidarity with our colleagues, who are part of the civil society in Moldova – especially those in the EaP CSF Moldovan National Platform.

We wish to support the EaP CSF Moldovan National Platform statement dated 4 October 2019 – which in our view, accurately defines the situation in the country as one of “state capture”. It refers to a condition where “an oligarchic group” has taken control of the economy, the legislature and justice system, the mass media and electoral system. Confronted by this state of affairs, the space for political opposition and non-governmental (NGO) sector is shrinking fast. What is more, the hope for this situation changing is undermined by the annulment of the result of the Chisinau local elections in 2018. This step bodes ill for the national elections, which are to be held in February 2019.

The seriousness of the situation is reflected in the EaP CSF Moldovan National Platform statement. This is not a purely local matter, but one that has an international dimension. The country has been, and threatens to continue to be, a major money-laundering centre, which de facto undermines the financial system in Europe and beyond.

Thus, we repeat the demands of our colleagues in the EaP CSF Moldovan National Platform:

- That there is to be an independent investigation into the USD 1 billion bank fraud
- That targeted sanctions are to be applied against those guilty of usurping state power in the Republic of Moldova
- That the institutions and member states of the European Union monitor and react to the situation in Moldova – as well as define adequate pre-conditions for any financial support granted to Moldovan authorities
- Develop and apply an international Magnitsky Act-type document that targets those in power who use illegal funds to obstruct democratic processes in Moldova and abroad

The capture of state power is fast becoming a reality in Moldova. It threatens to spread to other countries in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere. We appeal to the justice authorities in the European Union, as well as lawyers and academics to work on developing a body of law – which could be used to fight this crime through international tribunals, such as the European Court of Human Rights or the International Criminal Court.

Members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum