

# EU-Republic of Moldova Human Rights Dialogue

Chisinau, 20 June 2017

On 20 June 2017, the European Union and the Republic of Moldova held the eighth round of their Human Rights Dialogue in Chisinau.

In line with its policy of consulting civil society ahead of meetings on human rights, the European Union met representatives of Moldovan and international Civil Society Organisations prior to the Dialogue. Civil Society representatives were also invited to the Dialogue and attended as observers.

The Dialogue was held in an open and constructive atmosphere. The Moldovan Government has an ongoing commitment to improving the human rights situation in the country and achieving sustainable progress in this area. Following up on developments since the last Dialogue in June 2016, discussions covered a wide range of issues: freedom of expression, pluralism of the media and reforms in the audio-visual domain; the electoral legislation; the protection of vulnerable groups, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; the rights of the child; and the fight against impunity, ill-treatment and human rights protection in the justice system.

The creation of a National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and Moldova's signature of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence were appreciated by the European Union. A Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan, taking into account the recommendations of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review in this process, should now be adopted. The European Union recalled the importance of providing the necessary resources to the Office of the Ombudsman on Human Rights (Advocate of the People) and the Equality Council (the national anti-discrimination institution) for them to be able to fulfill their mission. The EU also underlined the need to align Moldova's legislation on freedom of the media with European standards, to finalise the work on the new Audiovisual Code and to continue combating all forms of discrimination on any ground.

The Dialogue also offered the opportunity to touch upon a key topic in the current EU-Moldova political dialogue: the proposed reform of the electoral system. In this respect, the European Union reiterated its expectation that the authorities of the Republic of Moldova would study the Opinion issued by the Venice Commission and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on a draft revision of the electoral legislation of the Republic of Moldova, and follow its recommendations.

The Moldovan delegation was led by Mr Vladimir Cebotari, Minister of Justice and by Mr Nicolae Eșanu, Deputy Minister of Justice. The EU delegation was led by Mr Adriano Martins, Deputy Head of Division for bilateral relations with the Eastern Partnership countries in the European External Action

Service.

The next Human Rights Dialogue between the European Union and Moldova is scheduled to take place in Brussels in 2018.