

Statement by the Spokesperson on the Venice Commission and OSCE

We have taken good note of the Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' Opinion on a draft revision of the electoral legislation of the Republic of Moldova.

As highlighted by the Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' Opinion, the choice of an electoral system is a sovereign decision of a State.

However, we share the view of the Venice Commission and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that the proposed changes raise serious concerns in the current political context and that the existing polarisation around this legislative initiative is not indicative of meaningful consultation and a broad consensus among key stakeholders.

The most significant concerns include: risks of influence on candidates and on the design of single-mandate constituencies, excessive thresholds for parliamentary representation in the proportional component and risks of inadequate representation of minorities and women.

In addition, this proposed revision does not address earlier recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and concerns pertaining to the regulation and oversight of political party and campaign finance, which would pose further challenges to effective control and supervision, also due to a lack of appropriate resources in the Republic of Moldova.

Against these concerns and considering the lack of consensus on this legislative initiative, we concur with the opinion of the Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that *"such a fundamental change, while a sovereign prerogative of the country, is not advisable this time"*.

The proposed revision, if adopted by the Parliament, and its practical implementation, will be assessed in light of the Republic of Moldova's obligations as a member of the Council of Europe. We recall that democracy and the rule of law are also at the core of our Association Agreement.

In this spirit, we expect the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to respect the authority of the Venice Commission and we encourage the Republic of Moldova to pursue and further deepen its close cooperation with the Council of Europe and its bodies, addressing all their concerns and recommendations.