

Brussels, 16 December, 2016

Ministry of Justice of Moldova

Mr Minister Vladimir Cebotari
82, 31 August 1989 Street
Chisinau, Moldova

General Prosecutor's Office of Moldova

Mr General Prosecutor Eduard Harunjen
26, Mitropolit Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni Street
Chisinau, Moldova

Rishcani District Court

Mr Oleg Melniciuc
3, Kiev Street
Chisinau, Moldova
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Centru District Court

Ms Ecaterina Palanciuc
43, Bulgară Street
Chisinau, Moldova
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Dear Madam/Sir,

As Members of the European Parliament, we would like to express our deep concern over the recent extremely worrying events around Ms Ana Ursachi and Mr Eduard Rudenco, prominent Moldovan lawyers and human rights defenders, which currently take place in the Republic of Moldova. Mr Rudenco and particularly Ms Ursachi have become recently victims of intimidating and defamatory campaign led by the Moldovan prosecutor's offices and media outlets, which are highly influenced and politicized by a Moldovan oligarch Mr Vlad Plahotniuc.

Ms Ursachi as a renowned lawyer and human rights activist dedicated herself to the professional defence of *inter alia* opponents and critics of Mr Plahotniuc and his proxies. Such politically motivated and sensitive criminal trials like these of a Moldovan-Ukrainian citizen - Mr Vyacheslav Platon-Kobalyev, a key witness in a criminal case against Mr Plahotniuc's embezzlement of \$1 billion dollars from Moldova's state budget (later illegally extradited from Ukraine to Moldova, where he is now unlawfully detained); or of a Moldovan citizen - Mr Sergiu Cibotari, a former employee of the Post of Moldova and a key witness in a criminal case against Mr Plahotniuc's allies smuggling activities within the state enterprise (initially detained for planning to present to the special parliamentary commission evidence); became reasons of the initiation of a criminal punitive trial against Mr Ursachi in mid-October 2016. The alleged accusations make the reference to twenty years ago events, claiming Ms Ursachi's affiliation to a criminal organization, to which she is totally alien. In addition, the media groups owned by Mr Plahotniuc launched a lynching campaign against Ms Ursachi, aimed at publicly criminalizing her and causing harm to her professional credibility. Due to the current situation Ms Ursachi is afraid of her and her family's safety in Moldova, as well as has to be represented by another lawyer - Mr Rudenco. Because of defence of

Ms Ursachi and her clients, Mr Rudenco also has become a target of the campaign initiated and orchestrated by Mr Plahotniuc.

As Members of the European Parliament, we strongly condemn Mr Plahotniuc's abuse of, and political influence on the Moldovan state institutions like the prosecutor's offices, courts and media outlets, for politically motivated reprisals, which serve as an extensive tool of repression against his opponents and critics. We condemn the actions against lawyers, human rights defenders, civic activists or even independent prosecutors and judges who refused to participate in the politically motivated trials, as well as business representatives who support the democratic opposition and its anti-corruption activity, like for instance a judge Ms Domnica Manole from the Appellate Court in Chisinau and a businessman Mr Alexandru Machedon.

Therefore, we call on the Moldovan authorities to immediately stop the above mentioned illegal actions against Ms Ursachi, Mr Rudenco, Mr Manole, Mr Machedon and others, and remind that the human rights and democracy situation in Moldova and other states of the European Neighbourhood Policy is under the permanent scrutiny of the European Union and its institutions, including the European Parliament and its commissions and delegations.

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Rebecca Harms MEP (Greens/EFA)

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CC:

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