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Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)

Honouring of obligations and commitments by the Republic of Moldova

Revised information note by co-rapporteurs Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez, Switzerland, Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group and Ms Inese Libiņa-Egnere, Latvia, Group of the European People's Party

On recent political developments in the Republic of Moldova

1. Introduction

1. In November 2020, Maia Sandu was elected President of the Republic of Moldova by 57% of the voters. She became the first woman to be elected to this position. The programme of Maia Sandu included reforms of the judiciary and the fight against corruption. However, Maia Sandu's Party Action and Solidarity (PAS) did not have a parliamentary majority. At that time, the main political parties, including PAS and the Party of the Socialists (PSRM), which has the largest political faction in parliament, were in favour of the organisation of early parliamentary elections. Later on, their views differed however on the timing of these elections. Subsequently a power struggle between the presidential administration and the parliament ensued, while questions on the interpretation of constitutional provisions were referred to the Constitutional Court on many occasions by all political parties to settle these disputes. This situation led to a serious political and constitutional crisis by April 2021.

2. This information note focuses on the political developments that occurred between the election of the President in November 2020 and the dissolution of the parliament in April 2021. As newly appointed rapporteurs (respectively in October 2020 and February 2021), we haven't been in a position to travel to the country due to the pandemic crisis. However, the Monitoring Committee followed with due attention the developments in the country: an internal memorandum on recent developments was discussed in September 2020. One of the rapporteurs, Mr Fridez, met the Moldovan delegation to the PACE during the January 2021 and April 2021 part-sessions and had a bilateral meeting with Ms Olesea Stamate, Adviser for Justice of the presidential administration on the occasion of the address by President Sandu to the Parliamentary Assembly on 19 April 2021. We would like to thank the authorities and the Moldovan delegation for the excellent cooperation and availability to address our concerns.

3. In this information note, we intend to describe – without being exhaustive - the main events that have led to the call of early elections in a highly polarised environment. We would also like to highlight some issues of concern that should be addressed as a matter of priority by the next parliament.

¹ Document declassified by the Monitoring Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2021.

2. The presidential election of 1st and 15 November 2020 and its political consequences

4. The presidential election followed an unstable period, with three governments being invested within a year: following a serious constitutional crisis in June 2019,² Maia Sandu, leader of the PAS, became Prime Minister in June 2019, following an agreement between the ACUM bloc (composed of PAS and the Dignity and Truth Platform (DA)) and the Party of the Socialists to “de-oligarchise” the country. Following a disagreement on the modalities of the selection of the General Prosecutor, the Government of Ms Maia Sandu was defeated by 63 votes³ by the Party of the Socialists and the Democratic Party (DP) on 12 November 2019. Upon the proposal of the then President, Igor Dodon, a technical government was formed in November 2019 (8 of the 10 cabinet ministers were former presidential advisors to President Dodon) and approved by the parliament with the support of the PRSM and the DP. On 16 March 2020, the Party of the Socialists and the Democratic Party signed a coalition agreement leading to a re-shuffle of the government; the Democratic Party was granted five ministerial posts, including the Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the Minister of Defense. In November 2020 however, the Democratic Party withdrew its ministers from the Government, left the parliamentary coalition shortly before the second round of the presidential election and supported the candidature of Maia Sandu.

5. The presidential election was organised on 1st November and 15 November 2020. Due to the sanitary conditions, the Assembly could not observe, but the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed a limited election observation mission. Incumbent President Dodon, running as an independent candidate supported by the Party of the Socialists, and the leader of the Party of Action and Solidarity, Maia Sandu, reached the second round. Businessman and leader of “Our Party”, Renato Usaitii, who had won nearly 17% of the votes in the first round, appeared as the kingmaker, called on the voters not to vote for Mr Dodon and demanded that early elections be organised. In the runoff to the election, Maia Sandu won a clear victory (57%), with a massive support (92%) of the voters from the diaspora and became the first elected woman to this position.

6. ODIHR concluded that fundamental freedoms of assembly and expression continued to be respected, there was however negative and divisive campaigning and polarising media coverage, lack of effective campaign finance oversight, intolerant and divisive rhetoric in the second round, prominent discussions over the role of Moldovan diaspora, allegations of undue influence on public officials and voters and possible vote-buying and organised transportation of voters on election day.⁴

7. Taking advantage of her victory, and expecting to win the majority in the parliament at the next election, President Sandu called on the government to resign, protested against the usurpation of power in parliament, and demanded fresh parliamentary elections in order to allow the country to launch the reforms expected by Maia Sandu’s voters. However, in the parliamentary system, the President does not have the power to dissolve the parliament. According to the constitution, the parliament can only be dissolved if the Prime Minister resigns, and if the parliament is not able to form or support a government and adopt laws for a period of three months. Such a scenario would have required an agreement between the political parties. Mr Dodon, whose party had the largest faction in parliament and held the position of Speaker of the parliament, had expressed their support to the idea of snap elections and blamed the work of the parliamentarians, but he added that elections should only be organised at a later stage, after the winter pandemic period was overcome.

8. President Sandu however challenged, in the following weeks, the new parliamentary majority formed by the Party of the Socialists and the Shor party and the integrity of some of the MPs who supported this coalition, notably due to their involvement in the 2014 bank scandal.

9. At this point, there is a need to recall that the parliamentary majorities in the Republic of Moldova have often been unstable and volatile. In this respect, it is highly worrisome to see that, since the last parliamentary elections of February 2019, 25% to 30% of the members of parliament have switched political factions at least once (if not two, or three times), and this is unfortunately confirming a parliamentary practice which is not new.⁵ This leads us to question the representativity of the parliament: to which extent it still reflects the

² See [Doc 14963](#) and PACE [Resolution .2308 \(2019\)](#) on “The functioning of democratic institutions in the Republic of Moldova” of 3 October 2019 which described this crisis.

³ The parliament comprises 101 members in total.

⁴ See “ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission [Final Report](#)” published by ODIHR on 26 February 2021.

⁵ In December 2015 for example, 14 Communist MPs joined the Democratic Party overnight. No thorough investigation was conducted at that time into allegations of political corruption.

will expressed by the voters back in February 2019. Our predecessors Mr Vareikis and Ms Blondin had already raised the attention of the Monitoring Committee in September 2020 to this issue and had noted these developments with concern: *“On 20 February 2020 six members of the Democratic Party, including [former] PACE members Mr Candu and Mr Cebotari, left the Democratic Party (PDM) and created a new political party (and parliamentary group) called “Pro Moldova”, which was officially registered on 18 June 2020. By July 2020, 14 of the 30 members of the PDM faction had joined Mr Candu’s Pro Moldova party, and two had joined Mr Ilhan Shor’s Party. This “political migration” (or “political tourism”) raised allegations of political corruption. Mr Pavel Filip, leader of the PDM, requested legislation on this issue (an idea also supported by President Dodon). On 11 June 2020 the parliament adopted a [Declaration](#) condemning party defectors and political corruption in parliament. Later in June, two MPs from the Democratic Party and one of the deputies from the Party of Socialists (PSRM), Mr Gatcan, announced their decision to leave their respective factions and join the Pro Moldova party.”*⁶ Since then, no meaningful action has been taken to address this issue, which has created chronic parliamentary instability.

10. Before Maia Sandu took office on 24 December, the parliamentary majority composed of the Party of Socialists and Shor Party passed, in a hasty and non-transparent manner, important pieces of legislation. The most important one related to the control of the intelligence services: the parliament decided to resubordinate the Information and Security Service from the presidential administration to the parliament – thus weakening the newly elected President. This law, which was signed by incumbent President Dodon, was however challenged by Ms Sandu’s party. The Constitutional Court decided to suspend it until the Court could reach its decision. The modalities of adoption of this law were also criticised by the Moldovan ombudsman.⁷

11. The parliament also approved a set of important laws, including:

- A law on the status of the Russian language and amendments to Moldova’s Audio-Visual Code (that would soften a 2018 ban on the rebroadcasting of Russian political and military television shows);
- A law repealing the 2016 “law on the billion” (which had allowed the Moldovan State to issue bonds worth \$790 million dollars after a massive banking scandal had defrauded the bank system of about a billion dollars in 2014);
- A package of laws on the status of the Gagauz autonomous region, notably providing that any amendment to the Law on the Special Legal Status of Gagauzia can be adopted only after the People’s Assembly in Comrat approves the changes by a majority of votes;
- The parliament also considered a law providing for the dismissal of a series of heads of institutions, including the Audiovisual Council, the National Integrity Authority, the National Bank of Moldova, the National Agency for Regulation in Electronic Communications and Information Technology and the Service for Combating Money Laundering.

12. These laws were challenged by parliamentarians from the opposition parties (DA, PAS, DP and Pro Moldova), and were later either suspended or cancelled by the Constitutional Court. The Court decided for example to suspend the effects of the law cancelling the 2016 “law on the billion” until the Constitution Court reached its final decision. Concerning the Law on the functioning of languages, the Constitutional Court ruled, on 21 January 2021, that the law on the functioning of languages on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, which offered a special status to Russian alongside the official language, was unconstitutional. The Court ruled that Article 13 of the Constitution only recognised one official language [ie: Romanian, as stated by the Constitutional court in 2013], did not refer to the “language of interethnic communication” and mentioned the Russian language as one example. The law had therefore granted a preferential treatment to the Russia language compared to the other languages of ethnic minorities, which was unconstitutional.

13. The hasty adoption of sensitive laws, which were later either suspended or cancelled by the Constitutional Court, before Ms Sandu took over her presidential duties, created political confusion and legal uncertainty. Given the importance of these pieces of legislation and their long-term effects, a more responsible approach, based on dialogue between the main political parties, would have helped, especially in times of crisis management due to the pandemic.

⁶ Memorandum by co-rapporteurs Mr Egidijus Vareikis, Lithuania, EPP/CD and Ms Maryvonne Blondin, France, SOC, on recent developments in the Republic of Moldova, 28 August 2020.

⁷ The (late) Ombudsman Mr Cotorobai expressed his concerns that “bills with a crucial impact on people’s rights and freedoms were voted on in Parliament by ignoring the internal procedures, the principles of transparency and good governance and by preventing the opposition from becoming involved in the legislative procedure”.

3. From the resignation of the Chicu government to the failed attempts to nominate a new government (December 2020-April 2021)

14. On 23 December 2020, the Prime Minister, Ion Chicu, and the entire government resigned. The following day, Maia Sandu took oath as President of the Republic. On 31 December 2020, she appointed the outgoing Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Aureliu Ciocoi, as acting Prime Minister.

15. After the resignation of Prime Minister Chicu, President Sandu consulted the parliamentary factions and reached the conclusion that no party openly recognised that it belonged to a majority allowing it to propose a government. She ascertained that all the parliamentary parties were in favour of early elections even if there was no consensus on when to hold them. However, it turned out that no political agreement could be reached. The Party of the Socialists stated that it was necessary to bring the Covid-19 pandemic under control first, before organising elections.

16. PAS parliamentarians explored the possibility for the parliament to self-dissolve with a 2/3rds majority. This proposal was however declared inadmissible by the Constitutional Court which, on 18 January 2021, recalled a previous judgment of the Constitutional Court of 1997 providing, among others, that the dissolution of Parliament before the expiry of the period of four years was possible only under the conditions stipulated by Article 85 of the Constitution (the impossibility of forming the Government and non-adoption of laws during three months).

17. Igor Dodon (who was re-elected President of the Party of the Socialists after the expiration of his presidential mandate) urged Maia Sandu to appoint a Prime Minister and then work on a roadmap to snap elections. On 19 January, the PSRM MPs submitted a request to the Constitutional Court concerning the deadline within which President Sandu was required to nominate a candidate for the post of Prime Minister, and the sanctions that may threaten Maia Sandu if she should refuse to nominate a candidate for the post.

18. After a round of consultation with political factions, President Sandu submitted the candidature of Natalia Gavrilița, former Minister of Finance (June-November 2019), as Prime Minister. On 11 February, Ms Gavrilița presented her programme and the government team to the parliament – while inviting the MPs not to vote for it; she stated that her mere presence in parliament was a step to trigger early elections. As a result, none of the MPs present voted in favour of the Gavrilița Government. At the same moment, Igor Dodon, announced that the PSRM faction would not support Natalia Gavrilița and submitted the candidature of Mariana Durleșteanu, former Minister of Finance (2008-2009), to manage a transitional government until early parliamentary elections. The head of the PSRM faction, Corneliu Furculita, read in the plenum a declaration, signed by 54 parliamentarians belonging to the PSRM, the Shor Party and the Platform for Moldova supporting the candidacy of Mariana Durleșteanu.

19. At the same time, the Party of the Socialists challenged the proposal submitted by President Sandu on 11 February, considering that the candidature of Ms Gavrilița was insincere, and pursued the objective to trigger early elections. The Constitutional Court however declared this application inadmissible on 24 March, considering that Ms Gavrilița had presented her cabinet and programme, and that a vote had taken place.

20. The proposal to nominate Mariana Durleșteanu as a candidate for the post of Prime Minister was sent to President Sandu. The latter stated however that the signatures of some MPs raised questions as to whether they had signed it freely, some of them being involved in the "theft of a billion" [dollars]. She also noted that the proposal had also been signed by deputies who had switched parties and parliamentary groups and against whom there were reasonable suspicions of corruption and external pressure. In this situation, she decided to nominate Natalia Gavrilița again as a candidate for the post of Prime Minister. The decree of the President on the re-nomination of Ms Gavrilița was however challenged and declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court on 23 February 2021. The Court ruled that the President had to hold new consultations with political factions in order to reach a new compromise on the nomination of a candidate for Prime Minister, while stressing that the way of electing the President (either by universal direct vote or by the parliament) did not influence the way the President is exercising his or her powers regulated by article 98.1 of the constitution: "The President of the Republic of Moldova designates a candidate for the office of Prime Minister following consultations with parliamentary factions."⁸

21. Igor Dodon called on the President to immediately nominate a new candidate supported by a parliamentary majority, while Maia Sandu explained in an address to the citizens that the ruling of the Constitution was understandable but that the situation was not normal; she compared it to the years 2015-

⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, article 98.1 [Title III. Public authorities — Presidency of the Republic of Moldova \(presedinte.md\)](https://www.presedinte.md)

2016 when President Timofti was compelled to designate the candidate proposed by a short parliamentary majority after oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc had bought one third of the MPs, which later allowed the government to capture the state institutions. President Sandu urged early elections to take place and stressed that the de-oligarchisation should be started in parliament.

22. On 4 March, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling on the provisions of the Law on Government ruling that the interim government could not replace ministers⁹ but only vacant posts heads of 2d and 3d levels (secretaries of states, heads of department and agencies, etc). The PSRM favoured a fully invested government, while the Shor Party indicated that early elections should be organised after the pandemic was under control. The Democratic Party pleaded for a temporary anti-crisis government to deal with the pandemic, while Andrei Năstase reiterated the readiness of his party, the Dignity and Truth Platform (DA) to lead an anti-crisis minority government, as an alternative to the PSRM-Shor majority. The parliamentary group Pro Moldova, headed by Andrian Candu was ready, for its part, to support an anti-crisis government agreed by the presidential administration and the parliament.

23. On 16 March, Ms Durleșteanu, withdrew her candidacy, explaining that she no longer wanted her name and reputation to be used in the settling of old scores between political clans.¹⁰ In the absence of another candidate, President Sandu decided to submit the candidature of Mr Grosiu. The Socialists challenged this proposal and submitted the candidacy of Vladimir Golovatiuc (a former PSRM parliamentarian, recently appointed as Moldovan Ambassador to Russia). The Constitutional Court however ascertained that the presidential decree of 16 March nominating Mr Grosiu was constitutional, as President Sandu had fulfilled her constitutional duty to “consult the political groups”. The Socialists reacted harshly to the Constitutional Court judgment, labelling it a “constitutional coup”.

24. Shortly after, the Party of the Socialists declared in the plenary that a parliamentary majority made of 53 MPs from PSRM and For Moldova was against the dissolution of the Parliament and reiterated its support for Mr Golovatiuc as its candidate for the post of Prime Minister. On 25 March, due to a lack of quorum, the parliament failed to approve Mr Grosiu’s candidature.

4. The constitutional crisis of April 2021

25. On 29 March 2021, President Sandu asked the Constitutional Court to ascertain whether the conditions set by the constitution to dissolve parliament had been met. She argued that she had proposed two candidates to the post of Prime Minister, who were not approved by parliament, and that the three-month period had elapsed since the resignation of the former Government.

26. In the meantime however, on 31 March 2021, a parliamentary majority composed of 52 parliamentarians from the party of the Socialists and the Party For Moldova, decided to declare the state of emergency until 30 May (a decision that the parliamentary majority had rejected two weeks earlier at the proposal of the Party of Action and Solidarity). As a result, and in accordance with the law, it became impossible to dissolve parliament or organise snap elections. The opposition protested against this decision, claiming that the state of emergency introduced did not contain any concrete measures or sanctions for these violations. This decision was therefore seen as being politically motivated and seeking to delay the organisation of early elections. The opposition also feared that the parliamentary majority would be in a position to prolong the state of emergency beyond June 2021. As a result of this vote, the state of emergency granted extended powers to the interim government led by Aurel Ciocoi. This decision to declare the state of emergency was challenged at the Constitutional Court by unaffiliated MP Octavian Țîcu.

27. On 1st April 2021, the Speaker of parliament, Zinaida Grechanyi, sent a letter to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Marija Pejčinović Burić, to complain about President Sandu’s “usurpation of power” and to seek the mediation of the Secretary General in “the institutional conflict between the presidential administration and Parliament in order to restore the rule of law and return to constitutionality” (thus eluding the role of the Constitutional Court).¹¹

28. On 15 April 2021, the Constitutional Court ruled, by 3 votes to 2, that “the impossibility of forming the Government, in accordance with Article 85, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Constitution, is ascertained as a circumstance that justifies the dissolution of Parliament of the tenth legislature”.

⁹ Four ministerial positions were vacant, including the Minister of Health and the Minister of Labour and Social Protection.

¹⁰ https://www.ipn.md/en/mariana-durlesteanu-withdraws-candidacy-im-no-ones-puppet-7965_1080365.html#ixzz6u5b2AVb3.

¹¹ https://www.ipn.md/en/zinaida-grechanyi-complains-to-council-of-europe-op-ed-by-7978_1080814.html#ixzz6tuo66IVi.

29. Following this decision, which in practice allowed the President to dissolve parliament, Igor Dodon, claimed that the 3 judges of the Constitutional Court (Domnica Manole, Liuba Şova and Nicolae Roşca) who had voted in favour of this decision “usurped the high court of Moldova in the political interest of the country’s president, thus infringing the constitutional norms and the recommendations of the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission”. He announced that the parliamentary faction of the Socialists would not recognise the ruling of the Constitutional Court, demand the resignation of the three judges or block the allocation of state budget money to stage early parliamentary elections until the COVID pandemic was over. On 18 April the Party of the Socialists adopted a declaration demanding the resignation of President Maia Sandu and snap elections of the head of state.

30. On 23 April 2021, the parliament decided to remove the President of the Constitutional Court, Domnica Manole, by revoking the decision of April 2019 appointing Ms Manole as judge of the Constitutional Court, and to nominate another judge, Boris Lupaşcu. The parliament also adopted a declaration about the state being captured by the Constitutional Court.

31. These decisions of the parliament were in clear breach of the rule of law. The President of the Venice Commission, Gianni Buquicchio; issued a statement¹² calling for restraint and dialogue and asking the parliament to repeal its decision. He recalled that there was no such thing as a “no-confidence vote in the Judges of the Constitutional Court, which is in clear contradiction with the Moldovan constitution and the European standards on constitutional justice”. He added that “a decision of the Constitution Court that dissatisfies the legislative or executive powers does not amount to an abuse of power or an arbitrary decision. Nor does voting in favour of an unpopular decision of the court amount to a violation of the oath taken by the Constitutional Judges. Such an oath is not taken to the benefit of the political majority of the day. It is an oath to support the constitution, regardless of whether this entails disappointing such majority. (...) Democratic culture and maturity require institutional restraint, good faith and mutual respect between State institutions”.¹³

32. The controversial decisions of the parliament were challenged by Maia Sandu’s PAS party. On 24 April 2021, the Constitutional Court decided to suspend the two decisions, noting that the statements in the declaration adopted by the parliament, though political by nature, “affect the rule of law, the image of the Constitutional Court and endanger the implementation of an authentic culture of constitutionalism in the Republic of Moldova”.¹⁴ The Court later declared them as unconstitutional.

33. President Sandu requested an investigation from the General Prosecutor to determine whether the parliament had usurped its power. Boris Lupaşcu, who had been illegally appointed to replace the President of the Constitutional Court, Domnica Manole, voluntarily renounced his mandate.

34. On 28 April 2021, the Constitutional Court invalidated the decision of the parliament declaring the state of emergency from 1st April to 30 May. The country thus returned to the state of public health emergency. As a result, President Sandu signed the decree dissolving the parliament, and announced that early parliamentary elections would be held on 11 July 2021.

5. Some concluding remarks and perspectives

35. The call for early elections has put an end to a political and constitutional crisis that lasted nearly six months. We expect all political parties to now ensure the smooth preparation of these elections and show their commitment to a democratic electoral process. We trust that the authorities will ensure fair conditions for the conduct of these elections, which should be observed by the Assembly. As the environment remains highly polarised, we urge all political stakeholders to refrain from hate speech and show political responsibility and maturity. The election campaign, despite the constraints linked to the health situation, should allow the voters to make an enlightened choice, with the conviction that their vote will be respected by their elected representatives throughout their parliamentary mandate.

36. As a matter of fact, this political crisis has highlighted the nefarious impact of “political migration” within the parliament (with MPs switching parties) which has triggered chronic parliamentary instability. The fact that, within a year, a third of the members of the parliament switched parties, and even several times for some of them, raises very serious questions, in particular about their accountability to their voters. Since the

¹² Statement by the President of the Venice Committee Gianni Buquicchio on the constitutional crisis in the Republic of Moldova, 23 April 2021, [Venice Commission : Council of Europe \(coe.int\)](https://www.venicecommission.europa.eu/media-127566/attachments/declaration-2021-04-23-constitution-127566.pdf).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ https://www.ipn.md/en/cc-suspends-parliament-decisions-on-constitutional-judges-7965_1081245.html#ixzz6swbD1vE3.

parliament adopted, on 11 June 2020, its “Declaration condemning party defectors and political corruption in parliament”, no meaningful action has been undertaken to tackle this problem.

37. The recent political developments in the Republic of Moldova – which is a parliamentary democracy - have shown that the direct election of the President of the Republic, which was re-established in 2016, has, in practice, affected the institutional balance: during the previous presidential mandate, these tensions resulted in the temporary suspension, by the Constitutional Court, of the President of the Republic unwilling to promulgate the legislation adopted by the parliament (and in the absence of an anti-deadlock mechanism). In the current circumstances, the highly polarised political environment heightened the tensions resulting from a “cohabitation” between a president of the Republic and a parliamentary majority belonging to different political parties, and with very different views, which resulted in a non-cooperative attitude and even defiant action vis-à-vis the institutions.

38. In the past months, despite an apparent political consensus to have early elections, the newly elected President did not have the power to call new elections unless the constitutional conditions were met – and the parties were unable to reach an agreement to find an honorable exit to the political crisis. As a result, several questions concerning the interpretation of constitutional provisions were referred to the Constitutional Court, which was at the end expected to settle a political struggle between the presidential administration and the parliament. It is far from being ideal to ensure the proper functioning of democratic institutions. This leads us to encourage the Moldovan authorities to work on the constitutional changes which would be needed to clarify the functioning of the institutions. That would require the consultations of all stakeholders, and possibly a consensus among the main political parties to make the constitutional adjustments, if necessary.

39. To conclude, we can only support the call made by the President of the Venice Commission to respect the rule of law, show restraint, overcome the crisis through dialogue and find the necessary political compromises to ensure that the institutions are fully operational. This is urgently needed to address the sanitary situation and the economic and social challenges, negotiate financial assistance expected from international donors, fight against corruption, adopt the judiciary reforms in line with the Venice Commission recommendations (especially through the adoption of constitutional amendments needed to depoliticise the judiciary) and manage the many challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, in the interest of the Moldovan people. We also encourage the new parliament and the Moldovan authorities to implement the Action plan which was launched in Strasbourg on 19 April 2021 by President Sandu and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and which should be seized as an opportunity to consolidate democracy, rule of law and human rights.