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The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe takes attitude towards restrictions on the activities of NGOs from member states of the Council of Europe

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On June 27, 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2226 (2018) and Recommendation 2134 (2018) on new restrictions on the activities of NGOs in the Member States of the Council of Europe.

These documents were adopted on the basis of a report by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights describing the hostile climate in which NGOs operate in some member states of the Council of Europe. The report mentions the attempts of the Moldovan authorities in 2017 to introduce restrictive provisions on NGO funding.

The Parliamentary Assembly have asked the member states of the Council of Europe, inter alia:
• To revise and repeal or amend legislation that hampers the free and independent activity of NGOs and ensure that this legislation is in line with international human rights instruments regarding the rights to freedom of association, freedom of assembly and of expression;
• Not to adopt new laws that lead to unnecessary and disproportionate restrictions and financial burdens on NGO activities;
• Ensure that NGOs can seek, receive and use transparent funds and other resources, whether domestic or foreign, without discrimination or unauthorized impediments;
• Ensure that NGOs are effectively involved in the consultation process on new legislation concerning them and other issues of particular importance to society, such as the protection of human rights;
• Provide a favorable environment for civil society, in particular by refraining from any harassment (judicial, administrative or fiscal), negative public discourse, scandal campaigns against NGOs and intimidation of civil society activists.

One of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe is to establish a mechanism for receiving alerts on restrictions imposed on NGOs and to enhance cooperation with them.

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