

## **Open letter to the members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the occasion of the forthcoming vote of no confidence in the President of the Assembly**

3 October 2017

We, civil society organisations members of the Moldovan National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, welcome the recent motion of no confidence in the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) put forward by 158 members of the Assembly. We urge all its members to overwhelmingly support this motion at the forthcoming meeting of the Assembly on the 9th of October 2017.

The no confidence motion, marks a historic opportunity to start the process of rebuilding PACE's reputation as a defender of human rights and the rule of law.

The Assembly has, for far too long, tolerated misbehavior by some of its members, as reported by the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which has damaged the standing of the Council of Europe.

The Assembly has allowed corrupt practices by certain member governments to undermine its commitment to uphold fundamental values throughout the Council of Europe's member states. It has, at times, dismayed human rights defenders in the Eastern Partnership states and beyond who looked to PACE and other representative bodies such as the European Parliament for support in defending these values.

The recent establishment of an „Independent External Investigation Body” by PACE gives hope that the much needed renewal of the Assembly will not stop with the departure of the President. It also serves notice to all the members of PACE that corrupt practices will no longer be tolerated within its ranks. This is a process which must continue after the end of 2017 when the Independent Body is due to report.

The OCCRP investigation shows that democratic parliamentary assemblies in the free world must remain vigilant against threats to their integrity from unscrupulous and cynical governments. Otherwise the hope and support that these assemblies can extend to political prisoners and to democrats who are working for free and fair elections and the rule of law in Eastern Partnership countries and elsewhere will continue to be undermined.

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Association of Independent Press  
BIOS  
BPW Moldova  
Centre for Independent Journalism  
Centre for Politics and Reforms  
EcoContact  
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