

Public call of 24 civil society organizations that the principles of transparency and efficiency in the use of public money to be respected in the conditions of the pandemic COVID-19

To: The Government of the Republic of Moldova,
The Commission for Exceptional Situations of the Republic of Moldova,
The Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection,
The Ministry of Finance,
The National Medical Insurance Company,
The Public Procurement Agency,
The Center for Centralized Public Procurement in Health,
The National Agency for Complaints Settlement

In the context of the state of emergency and of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to ensure that doctors and other professional groups that are in the front line of the pandemic fight, have all the necessary means of protection and that the patients are provided the necessary treatment for all diseases.

In this connection, in order to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its consequences at the country level, it is of vital importance that the authorities:

- allocate sufficient funding in a timely manner to procure the means of protection, medicines, and medical equipment;
- reprioritize public procurement, based on the needs dictated by the state of emergency and public health necessities, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the predicted economic crisis;
- conduct fast, transparent and efficient procurement, in accordance with simplified procedures applicable to all urgent healthcare necessities.

In order to safeguard citizens' confidence that the authorities are taking all possible measures to save the lives of citizens, **we demand transparency and objectivity in planning and conducting urgent procurements.** Transparency is an important condition for the confidence of the society in the actions of the authorities, as well as for reducing the risks of corruption and increasing the efficiency of public procurement.

In this context, we ask the authorities:

1. **to publish detailed lists and technical specifications of the means of protection, medicines and medical equipment planned to be purchased;**
2. **to make direct purchases, including from foreign suppliers, in order to have access to the best prices, quality and delivery terms of the means of protection, medicines, and medical equipment;**
3. **to publish immediately the contracts for the purchase of the means of protection, medicines, and medical equipment, as well as the reports on the implementation of these contracts (goods, delivered quantities, etc.);**

4. **to ensure the transparency of the procedure for the resolution of the appeals; the National Agency for the Solution of the Appeals is asked to stream online the sessions for examining the appeals by using the modern means of video conferencing and to publish all the appeals and issued decisions on the web page of Agency;**
5. **to review the priorities of procurement in other areas, in order to ensure the fulfillment of all the needs of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences;**
6. **to use the possibility of carrying out with other states joint procurement procedures for means of protection, medicines, and medical equipment;**
7. **to increase the monitoring and control of direct purchases - without auction - of goods, services and works in order to avoid abuses;**
8. **to develop an open electronic system for the management of stocks of means of protection, medicines and medical equipment.**

It is important to consider the following:

- **Simplified procurement procedures to combat COVID-19.** On March 17, the authorities declared a state of emergency. This allowed the Commission for Exceptional Situations to decide on the simplification of procurement procedures necessary to combat COVID-19.
- **Lack of transparency in the public procurement process and lack of adequate motives for the volume of procurements propose to be conducted in order to fight COVID-19.** Authorities have allocated several tens of millions of lei for the purchase of masks, gloves, suits, protective screens and respirators. However, the transparency and soundness of these processes are not adequate. For example, it was proposed to purchase 1,957,980 medical suits for doctors. If they are designed for multiple uses, it is not clear why it was necessary to purchase this quantity, with which almost the entire population of Moldova could dress. At the same time, people face the shortage of protective masks, which, following the example of other countries, can be procured centrally and distributed free of charge to the beneficiaries.
- **Direct purchases from foreign suppliers can reduce the cost and delivery time of goods purchased to combat COVID-19.** So far, the authorities have purchased protection means and medicines only from local suppliers. However, this limits competition and, in the context of an emergency situation, can increase costs and delivery time. However, the legislation allows authorities to make purchases from foreign companies, which could lead to increased competition, lower prices and accelerate deliveries. However, the authorities have not yet resorted to this opportunity.
- **Priorities in the use of public resources in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences.** According to the information in the public procurement system, some contracting authorities continue to initiate purchases of goods, services, and works, which are not a priority (cars, renovation works, etc.), taking into account the state of emergency and the forecast economic crisis.
- **Abuse of simplified procurement procedures.** Cases have been detected, when the contracting authorities, using the state of emergency, procure with the help of direct

procurement, i.e. without auction, goods and services which have no connection with the fight against COVID-19 and with the protection of public health.

Given the significant impact of all the measures taken on the lives of the people of the Republic of Moldova, we ask you to consider this appeal.

The list of the organisations which subscribe to this call:

1. AO „Initiativa Pozitivă”
2. IDIS „Viitorul”
3. PN „Programe medical sociale”
4. BCU „Miloserdie”
5. AO „Liga persoanelor care traiesc cu HIV din Republica Moldova”
6. AO „Credința”
7. CCOE „Respirația a doua”
8. PN „Alianța de sănătate publică”
9. Centru de sprijin social „Trinity”
10. AO Centrul de informatii ” GENDERDOC-M”
11. Centrul de Resurse Jurice din Moldova
12. AO AGER
13. AO „Pentru Prezent și Viitor”
14. AO SMIT
15. AO „Adolescentul”
16. Consiliul Național al Tineretului din Moldova (CNTM)
17. AO „Centrul Regional pentru Politici Comunitare”
18. AO „Institutul pentru o Guvernare Deschisa”
19. AO „Pas cu Pas regiunea Sud”
20. Centrul de Sănătate și Dezvoltare Comunitară AFI
21. Comunitatea WatchDog.MD
22. Transparency International – Moldova
23. Institutul de Politici Publice
24. AO Parinți Solidari