



Resolution of the 2019 Media Forum of the Republic of Moldova

(Chişinău, 4-5 November 2019)

The participants in the 2019 Media Forum approve the following resolution:

1. Reiterating the firm conviction that the democratic development of the Republic of Moldova is impossible without fully respecting the principles of freedom of press and freedom of speech, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and other documents and international conventions to which our country is a party;
2. Reconfirming the commitment of the journalists community and line associations to contribute to building in the country an environment favorable to the development of the media on democratic principles and based on loyal competition;
3. Realizing that journalists and media outlets must effectively exert their mission of democracy watchdogs, convey different opinions in issues of major public interest, for an accurate coverage of reality and honest informing of the public, and a democratic governance must secure conditions for media functioning in the public interest.

The Media Forum:

- Finds that, with the change of the political regime in June 2019, a certain evolution of media freedom has taken place, expressed through an increase in the level of transparency of certain public outlets and a decline in the number of cases of intimidation and harassment of journalists while exercising their profession;
- Salutes the declared openness of the new authorities to support the effort of the journalist community and of media experts to continue improving the legal framework on media to the European standards;
- Finds certain evolution in the journalist access to public interest information;
- Finds that the legislation on private data protection has been further used abusively to restrict access to public interest information;
- Condemns how the Broadcast Council has reassigned broadcast frequencies and licenses, which leads to maintaining political influence on broadcast media contents, stimulates ownership concentration and dominant positions in shaping public opinion;
- Expresses its concern about the further involvement of some media outlets in political partisanship, displayed through the promotion of some political entities and discrediting of their political opponents.

The Media Forum requests the authorities:

- To resume and to ensure the work of the Working Group for improving media legislation until all laws necessary for the long-term development of independent media in the Republic of Moldova are drafted and passed;
- To implement the National Concept of Media Development in the Republic of Moldova and to ensure the preparation and broad consultation with the entire society of a medium- and long-term strategy and action plan for implementing the Concept;
- To ensure a due process of debate of legal proposals concerning the media sector, with the broad participation of journalists and media experts;

- To ensure open databases for journalists, to discourage/penalize refusals to provide public interest information and to remove the vicious practice of recording requests for information as petitions, contrary to the Law on Access to Information;
- The Competition Council to ensure the functionality of a free publicity market and free competition, penalizing cartel understandings on the market;
- The 2% Law to be completed with a provision to include media outlets in the list of potential beneficiaries of percentage designations, so that individual taxpayers are able to assign 2% of their income tax to support media outlets;
- The Broadcast Council (BC) to fulfill effectively its role of guarantor of public interest in broadcasting, to ensure fair conditions in issuing broadcast licenses, to not allow ownership concentrations or consolidation of dominant positions in shaping public opinion;
- The Broadcast Council (BC) to renounce the practices of discretionary monitoring of broadcast content and to make sure that all broadcast media service providers follow the legislation in force, including the Broadcaster's Code of Conduct;
- To develop strategies for supporting independent periodical publications, including on distribution and tax benefits;
- To formulate and make public the vision and actions of the authorities in relation to the transition from ground analog TV to ground digital TV, supporting the initiative of local and regional TV stations of working in a digital TV format.

The Media Forum urges journalists and media outlets:

- To act together in cases of inadequate behavior of the authorities, parties and other social actors;
- To follow strictly the deontological norms and professional standards;
- To reject involvements in denigration and media lynching campaigns, regardless of their purpose;
- To debate the opportunity of setting up a journalists syndicate that would pursue the social protection of journalists;
- To develop permanently their professional abilities, so that to offer quality media products to the public, including to organize and attend professional trainings.

**5 November 2019,
Chişinău**