



## RESOLUTION of 2024 Media Forum of the Republic of Moldova (Chişinău, 2-3 December 2024)

### **The participants in the 2024 Media Forum approve the following resolution:**

1. Being aware that freedom and pluralism of the media are the main pillars of democracy and the rule of law that need to be strengthened in the Republic of Moldova, based on the provisions of the relevant European legislation;
2. Sharing concern about the deteriorating situation of the media and the plight of journalists in some countries in the region and around the world, and sending a message of solidarity to colleagues who carry out their work in conditions of war and/or under abusive pressure from authoritarian regimes;
3. Reiterating the need to deepen reforms in order to strengthen the resilience of the media sector in the face of ongoing challenges;
4. Reaffirming the conviction that the adoption of and respect for the rules of journalistic ethics is a sine qua non for every media professional and every newsroom;
5. Reconfirming the commitment of the profession and its associations to strengthen journalism based on ethical principles, as a response to hybrid threats, but also as an unequivocal proof of serving the public interest;
6. Recognizing the importance of supporting the economic development of independent media;

### **The Media Forum finds:**

- Moldova's status as a candidate country for accession to the European Union requires concrete commitments and decisive action to bring the national regulatory framework into line with the requirements of the European Media Freedom Act;
- Some of the recommendations of the 2023 Media Forum Resolution addressed to the authorities have been implemented. In particular, the government has identified and put in place a mechanism to support the independent print press in the event of an increase in tariffs for the distribution of periodicals. At the same time, this mechanism must be sustainable in order to support the public interest press;
- Taking into account the specificities of the 2024 elections, the Central Election Commission and the Audiovisual Council initiated and conducted extensive public consultations, which resulted in timely adjustments to the regulatory framework to facilitate proper media coverage of the elections;
- The Audiovisual Council used a new methodology to monitor the coverage of the elections by media service providers and, for the first time, produced monitoring reports that also included a comparative analysis of how each audiovisual service provider monitored covered the elections;
- During the elections, investigative journalists from the Republic of Moldova played a key role in exposing criminal vote rigging and manipulation;
- During the campaign, the Guild's solidarity was evident in the use of journalistic investigation and other relevant quality content on various media platforms to amplify its impact;
- Coverage of the 2024 elections showed some professional shortcomings, with some media outlets failing to adequately inform the electorate and serving the interests of political patrons, while information manipulation campaigns through online media and social networks increased;
- Attacks on media professionals, especially on social networks, are becoming increasingly violent and the authorities are failing to deter this type of illegal behaviour;
- Despite measures taken by the authorities with the stated aim of protecting the domestic information space, hostile foreign interference and malicious disinformation campaigns continue to undermine the integrity of democratic processes;
- Related new legislation, such as the Law on Advertising, the Law on Access to Information of Public Interest, the Law on the Media Subsidy Fund or the Election Code, has not yet had the expected impact;
- Drafting of a new media law and amendments to the Audiovisual Media Services Code was initiated;
- The Competition Council has responded to requests to ensure transparency of data relevant to the analysis of the media advertising market, thus facilitating a better understanding of market processes and allowing for better planning of sales policies;

- The media advertising market has been restructured, but it does not currently allow most media outlets to ensure their economic and editorial independence;
- The national public media service provider has made some progress, although the contribution of the Supervisory and Development Board is not clear, and its activity in 2024 did not have the expected public visibility, nor was its position heard, especially in the case of unfounded accusations against Teleradio-Moldova Broadcaster by election candidates or referendum participants;
- The regional public media service provider, Gagauziya Radio Television, is moving away from its social mission and remains under the strong political influence of the autonomous authorities, which are themselves controlled by groups involved in illegal activities and influenced from outside;
- The Press Council has initiated the necessary procedure to complete the Code of Ethics of Journalists of the Republic of Moldova, including the use of artificial intelligence in the creation of media content;
- Access of local and international journalists to the Transnistrian region continues to be restricted, and cases of unlawful obstruction of journalistic activities by so-called peacekeepers continue to be reported.

**The Media Forum requests the Moldovan authorities to:**

- Ensure the necessary framework and conditions for the drafting, wide consultation and adoption of a new media law and the necessary amendments to existing legislation, including the Audiovisual Media Services Code;
- Ministry of Culture to develop and implement appropriate public policies in accordance with the National Media Development Program, including ensuring the proper implementation of the objectives set by the Law on the Media Subsidy Fund;
- Prosecutor General's Office and the Ministry of Interior to respond swiftly and consistently apply the law to deter and curb attacks on journalists and media outlets;
- Central and local authorities to continue their efforts to improve communication with the media in order to contribute to informing the public adequately and effectively about current events, including European integration activities;
- Audiovisual Council to continue its efforts to effectively implement the legislation. During the election period, to focus on the quality of the editorial policy statements of audiovisual media service providers in their coverage of the elections, and on monitoring their compliance with their own commitments;
- Parliament, Central Election Commission, Audiovisual Council to analyze the experience of the implementation of the new electoral legislation and, depending on the results, to make the necessary changes/adjustments to the relevant normative framework in a timely manner;
- Parliament to initiate the completion of Article 94 of the Election Code (Right to file a complaint) by including the phrase "journalists and media outlets" in its content, in order to give journalists greater protection in relation to electoral candidates;
- Supervisory and Development Board of the national public media service provider to certify its usefulness in the process of reforming "Teleradio-Moldova" Broadcaster;
- Board of Observers of the regional public media service provider Gagauziya Radio Television to not allow interference from regional authorities in the editorial policy of GRT, in order to ensure a real pluralism of opinions and an objective and balanced reflection of reality.

**The Media Forum approves the amendments and the new wording of the Code of Ethics of Journalists of the Republic of Moldova and authorizes the Press Council to promote and monitor the implementation of the new provisions of the Code.**

**The Media Forum urges journalists and media outlets to:**

- Strengthen the fact-checking process before publishing journalistic material and to not use their media platforms to disseminate unverified or speculative information, especially during elections;
- Keep a permanent focus on the actions of the authorities and society as a whole in order to ensure the irreversible European course of the country;
- Respect their ethical obligation to accurately inform the public, especially in the face of brutal hybrid threats;
- Monitor the implementation of reforms and the use of public funds, critically scrutinizing the actions of the authorities without resorting to self-censorship;
- Press Council to monitor compliance with the Code of Ethics of Journalists of the Republic of Moldova, including new rules on the use of artificial intelligence in the creation of media content.

**3 December 2024,  
Chişinău**