

19 September 2017

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Warsaw

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of Human Rights Embassy and our partners I would like to draw your attention to the deterioration of the state of justice in the Republic of Moldova.

Last year, during HDIM 2016 we reported on the inadmissible interference in the legal profession through the cases of human rights lawyers \ defence attorneys - Veaceslav TURCAN and Maxim BELINSCHI - that have faced criminal charges related to their work. These cases are only two amongst others in which lawyers' rights are infringed, namely their right to independence and freedom of exercise. Their criminal cases are accompanied by procedural violations and bear signs of political motivation. These cases illustrate well-founded concerns around illegal and selective forms of "justice", including concerns that the justice system is being used as an instrument to combat perceived political opponent.

Another case, the case of dismissed judge - Domnica MANOLE - shows serious signal of attack on the independence of judiciary. Just recently the Superior Council of Magistracy declared judge Manole incompatible with judge's office and proposed to the President of the Republic of Moldova her dismissal. The decision on dismissal was contested at the Supreme Court of Justice, as this is the only judicial remedy to verify the legality of the Superior Council of Magistracy decision. The first hearing to examine the appeal was set for 4 August 2017, and it was very logical to decide on the proposal on dismissal only after the case has been finalized by the Supreme Court of Justice. However, on 21 July 2017, the President issued the decree to dismiss Ms. Manole from the post of judge, the fact that confirms our concerns regarding pressure on the judiciary in Moldova.

**We call upon all national authorities: 1)** to uphold its international obligations to take all necessary measures to respect, protect and promote the freedom of exercise of the legal profession without improper interference from the authorities or the public, as it affects fair legal representation and damages the rule of law in general; **2)** to respect the independence of judiciary, which is a pillar of rule of law and democracy.

**We call on international organizations**, in particular the OSCE, Council of Europe, European Union and United Nations, to monitor the state of justice and to intervene by means appropriate to each organization to stop the deterioration of the state of justice in the Republic of Moldova.