Resolution on the political crisis in Moldova following the invalidation of the mayoral elections in Chiinu

2018/2783(RSP) - 05/07/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 343 votes to 35 with 160 abstentions, a resolution on the political crisis in Moldova following the invalidation of the mayoral elections in Chiinu.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups.

Parliament expressed its deep concern at the **decision to invalidate the results of the elections** for Mayor of Chiinu by the Supreme Court of Moldova, which it felt was taken on dubious grounds and in a non-transparent way. This has significantly undermined the integrity of the electoral process.

It recalled that Andrei Nstase won the early mayoral elections in Chiinu, after a two-round contest on 20 May and 3 June 2018, receiving 52.57 % of the vote and defeating Ion Ceban, who obtained 47.43 %, which result was recognized by international observers. However, Chiinu courts, upheld by the Supreme Court, voided the results of the mayoral elections, on the grounds that both candidates had addressed voters on social media on election day, after the legal end of campaigning. Members noted in this connection that the ‘get out the vote’ invitation, which the courts considered as amounting to pressure and undue influence on voters, has been a common practice in previous elections in Moldova and had never led to their cancellation.

They shared the demands of, the thousands of people protesting in the streets of Chiinu and demanding that the Moldovan authorities take appropriate measures to ensure that the results of the Chiinu mayoral elections are respected.

Expressing its grave concern over the **further deterioration of democratic standards** in Moldova, Parliament recognised that the decision of the courts, which have already been cited many times as politically influenced and driven, is an example of **state capture** and reveals a very deep crisis of the institutions in Moldova.

Under these circumstances, Members considered that the **political conditions for the disbursement of macro-financial assistance (MFA) have not been met,** recalling that a pre-condition for granting MFA is that the beneficiary country respects effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system and the rule of law and guarantees respect of human rights. It urged the Commission to suspend any foreseen disbursements of MFA to Moldova. Any decision on future disbursements should only take place after the planned parliamentary elections and on condition that they are conducted in line with internationally recognised standards and assessed by specialised international bodies, and that the MFA conditions have been met.

Parliament demanded that **the Commission suspend budgetary support for Moldova,** using the precedent of July 2015 when such suspension took place in the aftermath of the banking crisis. The mechanism for suspension should include a **list of conditions** to be implemented by the Moldovan authorities, which should include the validation of the elections in Chiinu and exhaustively transparent investigations, as well as asset recovery and the prosecution of perpetrators, in the case of banking fraud. Members called on the EEAS and the Commission to closely **monitor developments and to keep Parliament duly informed**.

Expressing its concern over the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a narrow group of people, the excessive politicisation of state institutions, systemic corruption, insufficient investigation of the 2014 banking fraud, as well as at the lack of independence of the judiciary, Parliament called on the Moldovan authorities to:

- **reform the judicial system**, including nominating new judges, so as to prevent the judiciary from intervening in the electoral and political process or in any other way undermining the democratically expressed will of the people of Moldova;
- make determined efforts to **recover the funds stolen** as a result of the 2014 banking fraud during which a total of around USD 1 billion was stolen from the Moldovan financial system, and bring those responsible to justice, irrespective of their political affiliation;
- address the recommendations of the OSCE/ODIHR and the Venice Commission on **electoral reform**;
- respect international principles and best practices and guarantee an **enabling environment for civil society.**