

# The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe asks for a more Effective Protection of Human Rights Defenders and NGOs

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe urges Member States to invest efforts in order to protect human rights defenders and ensure an enabling environment for NGOs. In this respect, two Resolutions were adopted on 28 January 2016.

The Assembly stresses that the responsibility for protecting human rights defenders lies first and foremost with States and that in some circumstances States may also be held responsible for the action of non-State actors aimed at intimidating human rights defenders and for failing to carry out effective investigations into such action.

At the same time, the States are urged to ensure an enabling environment for the work of human rights defenders and NGOs and effective protection against acts of intimidation and reprisals, and conduct effective investigations of any such acts.

One of the Reports underpinning these Resolutions present some true-life cases when the rights of human rights activists and defenders were violated in the Member States of the Council of Europe. Some of them refer to the situation from the Republic of Moldova.

[Mailis REPS](#), Rapporteur of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and author of [Strengthening the protection and role of human rights defenders in Council of Europe member](#)

[States](#) Report stated: “Moreover, activists from certain other countries are often subject to judicial or administrative harassment and to smear campaigns in the media; this is particularly in the case of those who work on sensitive issues. Human rights defenders working in the conflict zones, such as in Eastern Ukraine, Transnistria, complain about the lack of access to such territories. For example, members of a Moldovan human rights association, Promo-LEX, cannot enter Transnistria now, as they face serious criminal accusations”.

Liliana Palihovici, Head of the parliamentary delegation to PACE, also referred to the case of Promo-LEX Association, underlying the notoriety of this human rights organization in Moldova and the importance of its activity on the left bank of the Nistru River.

In her closing speech, Mailis REPS recommended to pay attention to the so-called grey zones, because it is specifically in these zones where the human rights and the defendants’ rights are violated most often.

The full text of the Resolutions in English is available [here](#) and [here](#). The video from the meeting is available [here](#).