

***Letter to the Members  
of the European Parliament***

**To:** To the Members of the European Parliament, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

**From:** Evghenia Gutul, Baskan of Gagauzia, political prisoner of the Maia Sandu regime

**I am writing to you from the poorest country in Europe:**

- 34% of the population is below the poverty line (in villages — 42%)
- Average pension — 2,800 lei (140 euros per month — almost 10 times less than the EU average)
- Inflation over 5 years has been +75%, food prices have increased 2-3 times
- Public debt has tripled
- A third of farmers are on the verge of bankruptcy

**And over the last two years:**

- Over 20 opposition TV and radio stations were closed without a court decision
- Over 100 media were blocked before the elections
- Dozens of politicians received a lifetime ban on participating in elections
- The central authorities cut Gagauzia's budget revenue by a quarter following my election

My case is just one of many examples of how power is exercised in Moldova. In this letter, I have described only a small part of what is happening. All of this is documented.

Freedom of speech, independent courts, fair elections, protection of national minorities — everything that should make Europe Europe — is being systematically violated in Moldova. And the Maia Sandu regime calls this "protection of European values."

***Before I show you the facts, I want to ask you: what do genuine European values mean to you?***

***Dear Members of the European Parliament!***

My name is Evghenia Gutul. I am writing to you from Prison No. 13 in Chisinau.

In May 2023, I was elected head of the Gagauz autonomy — a region of the Republic of Moldova. On August 5, 2025, the Buiucani Court sentenced me to 7 years in a colony for a case in which the prosecution could not present a single piece of real evidence.

Today, I am a political prisoner of the Maia Sandu regime — a regime that calls itself "pro-European" and claims to protect "European values."

To me, they mean a place where you can disagree with the authorities and not go to prison for it. Where courts are independent of the government. Where you are not tried under laws invented retroactively. Where national minorities are protected, not punished for their choices.

But what is happening in Moldova under Maia Sandu is not European values. It is an imitation. Let me prove it to you with concrete facts.

## MAIA SANDU vs. EUROPEAN VALUES

### 1. Freedom of speech

Since December 2022, more than 20 opposition TV and radio channels have been shut down in Moldova without a court decision. Initially, these media outlets were closed by the Commission for Emergency Situations in the Energy Sector<sup>1</sup> – a body that, by law, is chaired by the Prime Minister and has nothing to do with media regulation. Nevertheless, it was through this commission that unwanted channels were silenced. The Constitutional Court later declared these actions illegal, but that had no effect.

In October 2024, before the elections, more than 100 Telegram channels and websites were blocked. Many of them simply published opposition viewpoints.

President Sandu, in response to a journalist's question, said: "These are not mass media, these are mass disinformation media."

<sup>1</sup> The Commission for Emergency Situations in the Energy Sector is a body headed by the Prime Minister of Moldova. The decisions to close television channels were taken under Prime Ministers Natalia Gavrilița (December 2022) and Dorin Recean (October 2023) who are both close associates of Maia Sandu and her PAS party.

### 2. Judicial independence

Fact: In September 2023, the Court of Appeal of Moldova declared illegal the decision to remove the opposition party "Șansă" (Chance) from local elections (more on this case below).

After this ruling was handed down, Prime Minister Dorin Recean publicly, live on air, named the judges: "Remember three names – Ecaterina Palanciuc, Veronica Negru and Inna Dudca. This panel of the Court of Appeal yesterday annulled the decision of the emergency commission to hinder the criminal activity of criminal groups that tried to disrupt the electoral process in Moldova."

The public naming of judges by the head of government after an unfavourable ruling is not criticism of a judicial decision. It is an instrument of intimidation.

When judges are afraid to rule against the authorities, justice is dead.

This outraged everyone.

The Moldovan Association of Judges issued an official statement and called Prime Minister Dorin Recean's statement "a serious violation of the principle of separation of powers in the state and of judicial independence."

Here is what their statement said: "Attacks on judges, whether verbal, from representatives of the executive or other branches of government, undermine public confidence in the judicial system and can have a detrimental effect on the impartiality and effectiveness of the judiciary."

What would happen if the Prime Minister of France or Germany publicly named judges and said: "Remember these names"? The European Parliament would explode with outrage. But when the "pro-European" Sandu regime does it, the EU ambassador is silent.

### 3. Free elections

According to democratic standards, a country must have free and fair elections, and uphold the right of citizens to freely elect their representatives.

The reality in Moldova is this: the authorities systematically use three methods to keep the opposition from participating in elections.

#### Method 1: Last-minute removal

Marina Tauber – a candidate of the Shor Party who was leading the mayoral election in Bălți with almost 48% of the vote – was removed from the second round because of "undeclared pastries for volunteers." Court hearings on this matter lasted nearly 30 hours. The final decision was announced half an hour before polling began, when voters were already on their way to the stations.

The Chance Party, which was supported by Ilan Shor's team, was removed from local election on a Friday evening, 48 hours before Sunday's vote. The next day, a court declared the decision illegal, but the elections had already taken place.

#### Method 2: Intimidating judges

I told you about this above. As a result, judges understood that ruling against the authorities' instructions is dangerous.

#### Method 3: Lifetime bans

In June 2023, the Constitutional Court declared the Shor Party "unconstitutional." Parliament passed a law imposing a five-year ban on running in elections for anyone who had held leadership positions in that party. (This provision was later declared unconstitutional.)

For many candidates, this was political death.

Imagine this scenario:

In France, Macron removes a candidate from the ballot two hours before voting – because of undeclared croissants for volunteers.

In Germany, Scholz passes a law imposing a lifetime election ban on an entire party.

In Spain, the government cuts Catalonia's budget in half after Catalans elect an "inconvenient" leader.

Would you call that democracy? Or the end of democracy?

Real European democracy means that the people can choose freely, not "correctly". That the authorities fear the voters, not the voters fear the authorities.

In Moldova, the opposite is true: here, the authorities decide whom the people may choose. That is not democracy. It is a theatrical performance for Western partners.

*Honourable MPs, if these are European values, what kind of Europe do we need?*

### 4. Rule of law

The law does not have retroactive effect – that is the foundation of Roman law and European civilisation. This is a principle that is more than 2,000 years old. We remember it from our school lessons, when we were told about ancient Romans.

The state has no right to punish actions that were legal at the time they were committed. Because if the state can apply the law retroactively, it is not a state governed by the rule of law. You live in a state of absolute uncertainty and fear.

You cannot plan your life. You cannot be sure of anything: today you are a law-abiding citizen, tomorrow suddenly a criminal.

I was elected Governor of Gagauzia in May 2023 running as a representative of the opposition Shor Party. The party was legal, registered – but it was inconvenient for the Sandu regime. In June 2023, the party was banned. And in 2025, I was sentenced to 7 years for working with that party in 2019–2023, when it was still legal. The ban was applied retroactively: punishing the past.

Imagine that you started a business in France in 2023. Everything legal, all taxes paid, all permits obtained. In 2024, the government declares your type of activity illegal.

In 2025, you are tried for having engaged in that business in 2023, when it was allowed. And you are sent to prison for 7 years – not for murder or fraud, but for carrying on your business when it was legal.

Would you call that a state governed by the rule of law? Or lawlessness? In Moldova, this is done under the banner of "European integration."

*Question: If Moldova violates a 2,000-year-old foundation of European law, is it moving toward Europe or away from it?*

## 5. Rights of minorities

In Europe, the rights of minorities are protected. Catalans, Basques, Flemings – all have autonomy.

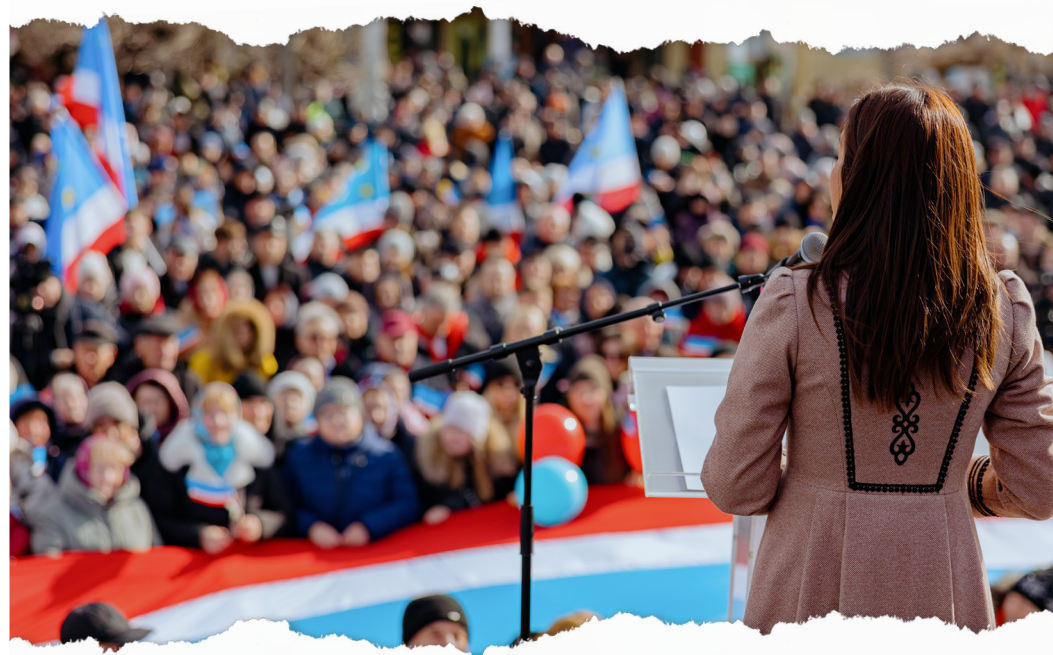
In Moldova, it is different: if you do not share the position of the PAS' party, you are punished.

Who are the Gagauz?

We are a Turkic-speaking people of Orthodox faith (a unique combination). The population of Gagauzia is about 155,000 people. The autonomy was created in 1994 – European

<sup>1</sup>PAS (Partidul Acțiune și Solidaritate) is the Party of Action and Solidarity, Moldova's ruling party, led by Maia Sandu.

organisations called it a "successful role model" of a peaceful resolution of a conflict.



After my election:

**Fact 1:** The central authorities cut Gagauzia's budget revenue by one quarter. An autonomy of 155,000 inhabitants had to live on reduced funding. Only later did a court ruling declare these actions illegal.

One village teacher told me: "Evghenia, I have been teaching children for 30 years, but I have never seen the authorities take revenge on an entire nation for its choice."

**Fact 2:** According to the Moldovan Constitution, the Baskan of Gagauzia is a member of the Government with the right to vote. President Sandu did not include me in the Government – a direct violation of the Constitution.

**Fact 3:** All investment projects for Gagauzia were blocked by the central government after my election.

**Fact 4:** When a philanthropist transferred funds directly to Gagauzia's budget for supplementary pension payments (with all proper documents and taxes paid), those funds were frozen under the pretext of "suspicious origin," despite provided evidence of the transactions' legality.

This is not just pressure on one politician. It is the economic strangulation of an entire region for an "incorrect" choice. Is this the protection of minority rights by European standards?

Imagine what would happen if the Basque Country elected a leader who criticised Madrid. In response, the central government of Spain blocked all investment in the region and sent that leader to prison for 7 years.

What would Europe's reaction be? Sanctions, resolutions, international investigations, front-page headlines, Brussels statements about "unacceptable pressure on a democratically elected politician."

But when exactly the same thing happens to the Gagauz in Moldova — everyone is silent.

### **Moldova today**

This is what happens when "European values" become a cover for the elimination of national sovereignty, the impoverishment of the population, and political repression against dissenters.

Maia Sandu is a citizen of Romania. She has two passports. She speaks everywhere about unification with Romania, calling Moldova and Romania "one nation."

Imagine the President of France holding a US passport and speaking about "closer ties with the United States." The President

of Poland holding a German passport and saying that "Poles and Germans are one nation." What would you think?

I ask a simple question: how can a person with two passports impartially represent the interests of a single country? Especially when that country is one of the poorest in Europe, while his other country is an EU member with a per capita GDP three times higher?

Sandu constantly talks about "European integration." But integration means countries coming together while preserving their identity. What is happening to Moldova looks more like absorption. The Moldovan language is called "Romanian." Moldovan history is being rewritten. Moldovan identity is declared a "Soviet myth."

But it is not only about passports. It is about who makes the decisions in Moldova.

When Sandu closed television channels, the US ambassador publicly supported it.

When Sandu removed the opposition from elections, the American embassy issued a statement about "protecting democracy." And that was under Biden, who constantly talked about democratic values.

When I was arrested, the EU ambassador remained silent, and Washington called it "fighting corruption."

Moldova does not make independent decisions. Every step Sandu takes is coordinated not with the Moldovan people, but with her foreign master. This is not conspiracy theory – these are public statements that can easily be verified.

Europe was supposed to be a union of sovereign nations with shared values. Moldova must have Moldovan values. France – French values. Germany – German values. That is the real Europe – a union of sovereign nations, not a colonial empire representing

the interests of a few clans.

Sandu has stolen the word "Europe." She has betrayed the real Europe for the sake of geopolitical games. She took the concepts sacred to Europeans – freedom, democracy, human rights – and turned them into empty slogans to cover up repression.



Moldova under Sandu is a warning to all of Europe: this is what happens when "European values" become a cover for:

- The elimination of national sovereignty
- The impoverishment of the population
- Political repression against dissenters
- Geopolitical games to the detriment of ordinary people

I ask you: if tomorrow the same thing is done to Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, will you also call it "European integration"? Or will you say that it is a takeover?

This is not only a Moldovan problem. French, Germans, Italians, Poles – ordinary people all across Europe are facing the same thing.

When "European integration" for politicians means trips to Brussels and fine speeches, while for ordinary people it means a hospital closed in their town and expensive petrol. When those who ask inconvenient questions are told: "You are a threat to democracy" – instead of being given a proper answer.

I see this every day in Moldova. But judging by elections in different European countries, we are not the only ones who see this problem. People are tired of their opinion meaning nothing.

#### **Honourable MPs, I ask you to:**

1. Initiate an investigation into the human rights situation in Moldova.
2. Freeze support for the Sandu regime until democratic standards are restored.
3. Demand the release of all political prisoners, including me.
4. Send a European Parliament fact-finding mission.
5. End the double standards approach applied to Moldova.

I ask you to defend genuine European values. The very values that Europe has been proud of for centuries and for which generations of Europeans fought. Do not allow Moldova to become a precedent for destroying democracy under the pretext of defending it.

*As long as my words can reach you, I will speak.*

Not only for myself, but for 155,000 Gagauz.

*With respect and hope for justice,*

*Evghenia Gutul,*

*Baskan of the Gagauz Autonomy of the Republic of Moldova,  
political prisoner of the Maia Sandu regime  
Written in Prison No. 13, Chisinau, Moldova*

2026

*P.S. For the European reader:*

*If you are reading this letter, you should know that I am not asking you to take my word for it. I am asking you to verify the facts. Everything I have written can be verified – court decisions, public statements by Prime Minister Recean, statistics on closed television channels, the budget of Gagauzia.*

*Today this is happening in Moldova. Tomorrow it could happen anywhere.*

*First they shut down inconvenient media outlets – this is dubbed “fighting disinformation.” Then they remove inconvenient candidates – this is called “protecting elections.” Then they imprison inconvenient politicians – this is “fighting corruption.” And all of this is called “protecting democracy.”*

*Moldova is a test: will Europe defend its values when it is inconvenient to do so? Or are “European values” just words?*