

A collection of European press and reports of the international monitoring organisations on raider attacks in Moldova, corrupt Moldovan judiciary and, particularly, the Topas case:

- (1) U.S. Department of State, report on Human Rights in Moldova for 2013, published on 27 February 2014:

- *"The most significant human rights problem in the country during the year was corruption, particularly in the judicial sector. Judicial institutions resisted the implementation of anticorruption measures outlined in the justice sector reform process."*,

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/eur/220308.htm>;

- (2) Freedom House, report "Nations in transit, Moldova, 2012":

- *"In 2011, fraudulent misappropriation of stock from chief shareholders in five financial institutions set off a chain of investigations and recrimination between different political parties and public institutions. The so-called "raider attacks" reflected the insecurity of a number of Moldova's largest financial institutions, and the affair became symbolic of political manipulation of the justice system. Meanwhile, disclosure of a secret coalition agreement allocating decisions about who would fill leadership positions in judicial and police institutions to the coalition partners also raised questions about the independence of these theoretically apolitical offices. [...] News of the actual fraud (the so-called "raider attacks") was soon followed by charges that justice and judicial officials had either failed to act in the case or supported the perpetrators. Two of the main victims of the fraud, Viorel and Victor Topa [...] Prime Minister Filat called for the dismissal of several top officials discredited by the raider attack scandals, including the prosecutor general, the head of the Information and Security Service, and the president of the National Commission of Financial Markets."*,

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2012/moldova>;

- (3) 30 April 2013, The Guardian, London, article "Moldova weighs up implications of overtures from EU and Russia", by Luke Harding:

- *"Key ministries in Moldova have been divided along party lines, with Plahotniuc's Democrats in control of the powerful prosecutor's office – capable of initiating criminal investigations – and the anti-corruption agency. Plahotniuc is a controversial figure in Romania: according to leaked Interpol documents he has been investigated in Italy in connection with money-laundering."*,

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/30/moldova-implications-overtures-eu-russia>;

- (4) 23 October 2012, "Business New Europe", Berlin, article "Moldovan oligarch Plahotniuc could face prosecution in UK", by Graham Stack, with regard to the raider attacks, on Plahotniuc's involvement as the perpetrator of these massive dispossessions, his role in Moldova's politics, the Topas' case, Plahotniuc's influence and control over the judicial

and prosecution systems of Moldova. The article's last section is suggestively entitled "*Democracy hijacked by oligarchs*";

- (5) 23 July 2012, Transparency International requested the Prosecutor General's Office to investigate the raider attacks on Victoriabank, Banca de Economii and the insurance company ASITO; as well as the implication of Vladimir Plahotniuc in the mentioned lootings. Hitherto no investigative actions are being carried out;

- (6) 5 September 2013, "Business New Europe", Berlin, article "Unseen forces wrest control over top Moldovan banks", by Graham Stack:

- "*Former shareholders in both banks claim they fell victim to "raider attacks", i.e., illegal expropriation. The identity of the new owners is unknown, but are allegedly linked to oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc and his group.*",

http://www.bne.eu/storyf5324/Unseen_forces_wrest_control_over_top_Moldovan_banks;

- (7) 12 May 2013, within the EU-Ukraine Forum, Krynica International Economic Forum, Budapest, the former ambassador of Moldova to the U.N., Alexei Tulbure, had a discourse entitled "Moldova is a perfect example of the so called captured state". He remarked:

- "*The main author and beneficiary of raider captures is nobody else but the actual leader of the Democratic Party, member of the AEI, and one of the leaders of the ruling coalition Mr Vladimir Plahotniuc, who has been monitored by Interpol since 2007. [...] Courts, Prosecutor's, National Centre for Combat of Corruption, Broadcasters Steering Council, regulating public agencies and so on – all fell under control of the Democratic Party, i.e. of Mr Plahotniuc. He got control over institutions that enable him to avoid responsibility for the crimes he commits.*",

<http://enews.md/blogs/view/3366/>;

- (8) 28 May 2013, Andrew Wilson, Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, article "The Shot Heard From Moscow to Brussels":

- "*The Democrats, financed by Vladimir Plahotniuc, Moldova's lone "oligarch," took over the legal sector. They already controlled many courts, which they had used to protect the financial operations of the old Communist elite – and indeed to take over many of those operations. Although now in opposition, the Communists therefore de facto helped the Democrats by continuing to block attempts to reform the system they had set up before 2009.*

But the Democrats also pushed hard to expand their influence, adding the Prosecutor General's office and the National Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC) to their empire. The NAC was set up with good intentions in 2002 but turned into its ironic opposite: its legal powers were used to soften up and take over businesses targeted by Plahotniuc. The scourge of so-called raiderstvo [corporate raiding] actually increased. In 2010-2011 Moldova-Agroindbank (the largest domestic bank), Victoriabank (the second largest), Banca de Economii (the Savings Bank of Moldova) and the largest insurance company, ASITO, all saw sudden and often unexplained changes of ownership to obscure offshore companies, usually on the basis of secret court proceedings. Two of the alleged victims, Victor and Viorel Topa, now have a case before the English courts, accusing Plahotniuc of

orchestrating the change to seize their assets. Banca de Economii has also been accused of laundering \$53 million out of the \$230 million for the Russian suspects in the Magnitsky case."

<http://www.tol.org/client/article/23792-moldova-ruling-coalition.html>;

- (9) 25 April 2013, Vladimir Socor from the Jamestown Foundation, Washington, article "Moldova's Tycoon Plahotniuc Gaining Political Influence":

- "Moldova's wealthiest businessman, Vlad Plahotniuc, is expanding his influence over state institutions. The power struggle, pitting Plahotniuc along with his Democratic Party (officially led by Parliament Chairman Marian Lupu) against Prime Minister Vlad Filat's Liberal-Democrat Party, has torn apart the governing Alliance for European Integration (AEI)."

http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5bttn_news%5d=40788&cHash=d2630c4d4b8f46a300cda5717dc7cacc#.Uev97tLJRsk;

- (10) 30 August 2013, the co-rapporteurs Ms Lise Christoffersen, Norway, and Mr Piotr Wach, Poland, within the report "Honouring of obligations and commitments by the Republic of Moldova" before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:

- "The Assembly remains particularly concerned about the level of corruption in the judiciary, the police, and the education and health systems, which is seriously undermining the confidence of the citizens in their institutions and the correct functioning of public institutions.";

- (11) 26 November 2012, "Simmons and Simmons" LLC, London, submitted a letter to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission concerning the raider attacks in Moldova. On 09 January 2013, in response to the Simmons and Simmons' letter, the European Commission thanked for "*referring the cases of Messrs. Victor Topa and Viorel Topa*" and acknowledged that

- "The Commission has closely followed the phenomenon of raider attacks on Moldovan financial institutions. [...] In the framework of our regular political and sectoral dialogue with the Republic of Moldova, we have stressed the importance of tackling this issue and of returning the misappropriated shares to their legal owners. We have also urged the Moldovan authorities to address corruption in the judicial system, and to vigorously pursue reforms in the area of financial services [...]";

- (12) 30 July 2014, Stephen Sackur, BBC (HARDtalk on BBC World News and the BBC News Channel), interview with Iurie Leanca, the then-Prime Minister of Moldova:

- Stephen Sackur: [...] "Mr Plahotniuc is the leader of the democrats, a key coalition member of your government. He still... his party still in effect appoints key positions, like the Prosecutor General, the Prosecutor in the Anticorruption Department (Head of the National Anticorruption Centre). These people who are under a cloud of suspicion are still at the very top of your government. [...] Why is Mr Plahotniuc still a key member of your governing coalition? Why was his party given the authority to appoint the Prosecutor General?"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgbfTNU_cx0&feature=youtu.be,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04dqrqp>,
<http://jurnal.md/ro/news/interviul-integral-cu-premierul-iurie-leanca-la-bbc-1174280/>;

- (13) 24 October 2014, DEUTSCHE WELLE, article "Moldovan justice, the most corrupt in the world":

- *"This is the conclusion of the Global Competitiveness Report (2014-2015), conducted by the World Economic Forum. Moldova ranked last in global rankings on corruption in the judiciary – position 144. Moldova's place is the worst in the "illicit payments and bribes to obtain favourable judgments."*,

[http://www.dw.de/justi%C8%9Bia-moldoveneasc%C4%83-cea-mai-corupt%C4%83-din-lume/a-18019515?maca=rum-rss-rom-moldova-4125-xml-mrss](http://www.dw.de/justi%C8%9Bia-moldoveneasc%C4%83-cea-mai-corupt%C4%83-din-lume/a-18019515?maca=rum-rss-rom-moldova-4125-xml-mrss;);

- (14) 06 February 2015, within the the TV show "Ora Expertizei", Veaceslav Negruta, Moldovan Minister of Finance 2009-2013:

- *"The deplorable situation of "Banca de Economii" derives from 2011, the moment when 18.5% of shares were fraudulently expropriated from the two businessmen – Victor and Viorel Topa."*,

<http://jurnal.md/ro/economic/2015/2/5/jocuri-murdare-in-sistemul-bancar-banca-nationala-a-autorizat-furtul-de-la-bem/>;

- (15) 18 February 2015, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, article "A different sort of bank robbery" by Karl-Peter Schwarz:

- *"The super-oligarch Plahotniuc secured control of the justice system for himself, including the Prosecutor General's office and the Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC). [...] The Liberals had insisted that the post of Prosecutor General be conferred on an independent prosecutor from one of the EU countries. But this was out of the question for Filat and Plahotniuc."*,

<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/europa/wahl-in-moldau-entscheidung-zwischen-eu-und-russland-13290118.html>;

- (16) 26 February 2015, DER SPIEGEL, article "NATO Warning: Putin focused his attention on Republic of Moldova" by Keno Verseck:

- *"Due to their murky business ties with Russia, the Moldovan oligarchs also have little interest in an EU integration process. The businessman Vlad Plahotniuc, 49, is the embodiment of this elite. The grey eminence of the Democratic Party, he is one of the most important power brokers in the Republic of Moldova. He is said to have made his fortune, estimated at several hundred million Euros, in part through so-called raider attacks on Moldovan banks and insurance companies. The term refers to the theft of shares in companies, legalized with the help of corrupt judges and officials."*,

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/republik-moldau-nato-warnt-vor-russischer-aggression-a-1020428.html>;

- (17) 18 May 2015, Business New Europe, Berlin, article "Scottish shell companies at centre of \$1bn Moldovan bank fraud scheme" by Graham Stack:

- *"The Plahotniuc connection. Edinburgh firms Victoria Invest Limited, Financial Investments Corporation Limited, and Maxpower Invest Limited were all named in connection with the alleged expropriation and subsequent transfer of stakes in Moldova's banks, with some of the expropriated shareholders bringing a court case in London. A court disclosure order in 2012 revealed that the beneficiary owner of both Financial Investments and Maxpower Invest was Vlad Plahotniuc, Moldova's richest man and at the time deputy first speaker of Moldova's unicameral parliament."*

<http://www.bne.eu/content/story/trail-scottish-shell-companies-1bn-moldovan-bank-fraud-leads-top-0>

- (18) 10 August 2015, Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, article „Bring Moldova Back From the Brink” in The New York Times:

- *"The state is still in the hands of oligarchs. [...] The government must immediately begin purging corrupt officials from public bodies. [...] As a start, the dozens of judges — some very high-profile — who have been accused of egregiously abusing their power should be investigated. [...] The Anti-Corruption Center, the National Integrity Commission and the General Prosecutor's Office must be set on an independent footing. [...] This captured state must be returned to its citizens."*

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/11/opinion/bring-moldova-back-from-the-brink.html?_r=1

- (19) 12 August 2015, GLOBAL RESEARCH report "Crisis, Corruption and 'Regime Change' in Moldova":

- *"A large part of this money (n.r. 1 billion dollars) originally was the EU public loan. Credits weren't surrendered. Leancă helped oligarchs Ilan Shor and Vladimir Plahotniuc to steal the money of National Bank of Moldova through these banks. Thus, oligarchs have been turning Moldova into a feudal state where about 50 percent of male population works in foreign states while their families are almost hostages in Moldova. The corrupt system of the oligarch dictatorship prevents the situation when people could improve their welfare inside the system or overcome such a system."*

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/crisis-corruption-and-regime-change-in-moldova/5468846>