

Three Questions to...

Maia Sandu, Moldovan Prime Minister

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: Moldova has experienced a peaceful change from an oligarchic system to a new coalition government, composed of a pro-European and a pro-Russian party – a transition supported by Russia, the US and the EU. What are the next steps for Moldova's development, and how could tensions between these unlikely coalition partners play out in the future?

SANDU: The top priority of this government is the reform of the justice sector, which is essential to ensure the rule of law and restore people's trust in their country. It is important to maintain this coalition to get this done. This will help set the stage for the country's development, for preventing and fighting corruption, and for setting a level playing field for businesses and, thus, for economic growth. I hope that our coalition partners share this conviction, and that we can work together towards this goal.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: Does Moldova's peaceful settlement of a political crisis provide a positive example for cooperation between Russia and the West in the Eastern Neighbourhood? What can others learn from the way in which Moldova has managed a conflictual relationship with Russia?

SANDU: The key driver for change was the desire of the Moldovan people to get rid of an oppressive regime which had rolled back democracy in Moldova and which benefited just a few people at the top. The EU practically froze its relations with the previous government. It was clear for both the West and Russia that the previous government was driving Moldova into a dead end, so they supported a peaceful – and legal – transition of power to a new government. Both would benefit from a more responsible partner in Chişinău, a government



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which would be representative and which would enjoy popular legitimacy. Moldova is focused on domestic reforms, and that should create a more stable state, which would be to the benefit of all key players involved. We are also working on restoring relations with Russia, especially economic relations, as Russia remains a key market for our producers, whose interests we must protect.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: 2019 marks the 10th anniversary of the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative. What is your vision for the future of the Eastern Partnership, and what are Moldova's hopes and expectations of Germany's upcoming EU Council Presidency?

SANDU: Moldova has seen tremendous benefits from the opportunities provided by the Eastern Partnership over the course of these past 10 years. We would like to see this partnership thrive, and our association with the EU deepen. I hope that this deepening of relations could become a staple of the German Presidency of the EU Council. We are committed to doing everything possible to make this happen.

