

Resolution on Association Agreements / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

2015/3032(RSP) - 21/01/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 335 votes to 230 with 102 abstentions, a resolution on Association Agreements/Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, and Greens/EFA groups.

Free Trade Areas: Members welcomed the efforts made by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in ensuring that national legislation approximates EU standards based on AA/DCFTA commitments. They recalled that the funds made available must be spent well, and that by themselves they are not enough to stabilise the economy.

Believing that parliamentary scrutiny was needed for monitoring of the implementation of the AAs /DCFTAs, Members underlined their **firm support for the territorial integrity of all three countries**. They **called on the Russian Federation to end its occupation of Crimea, and to put an immediate end to all direct or indirect involvement in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, as well as in the frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova**. Parliament condemned, in this connection, the actions taken by Russia to undermine or derail the pro-European course taken by the three association countries, and called for efforts to be stepped up to counter disinformation and improve the strategic communication of EU policies and activities in the Eastern Neighbourhood.

It stressed that the setting-up of bilateral DCFTAs with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova is a crucial tool for modern, transparent and predictable trade, regulatory approximation and gradual economic integration of the partners into the EU internal market. It also reiterated the importance of integrating civil society into policy-making and reform processes.

Members also stressed that, pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, **any European state may apply to become a member of the EU**.

Georgia: with regard to the agreement with Georgia, Members stressed freedom of the media, freedom of expression and plurality of information. They emphasised that judicial proceedings should be transparent, impartial and free from political motivation. They emphasised the fight against corruption, and the need for improvement in the political climate in Georgia.

Moldavia: Members expressed serious concern about the de facto systemic political instability, which has continued since the last parliamentary elections of 30 November 2014, and considered that the current political impasse in Moldova has reached a critical point. They called on the Commission and the Member States to extend all necessary technical knowhow and financial support to the future government of Moldova, following the example of the EU Support Group for Ukraine. The authorities were urged to investigate fully the corruption scandal and the theft of EUR 1 billion from the banking system. Members also called for a comprehensive reform of the media sector and for full transparency of media ownership.

Ukraine: whilst welcoming the entry into force as of 1 January 2016 of the EU-Ukraine DCFTA, Members condemned the fact that the **Russian Federation has unilaterally suspended its free trade**

agreement with Ukraine, has introduced heavy trade restrictions on Ukrainian exports to Russia and is hampering the transit of goods to third countries. They urged the EU to support Ukraine in current and future disputes with Russia launched in the WTO.

Parliament highlighted the Commission's unprecedented openness and efforts over a year and a half to address all doubts on the Russian side relating to the consequences of the implementation of the DCFTA and to find practical solutions. It reiterated the potential gains for Russia resulting from the implementation of the AA/DCFTA.

On territorial issues, Parliament expressed serious concern about the implementation of the Minsk Agreement by the initially agreed deadline of 31 December 2015, and recalled that the Russian authorities bear a particular responsibility in this connection. It reiterated that the restoration of Ukrainian control over the full length of its border with Russia has not materialised, that no agreement was reached on the modalities for the local elections in the temporarily occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk, and that not all prisoners and illegally detained persons, have been released.

Members deplored the fact that ongoing Russian aggression has caused a dire humanitarian situation in the Donbas, and that Ukrainian and international humanitarian organisations are refused access to the occupied regions. They also expressed deep concern over the challenging humanitarian conditions of the more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons and the human rights violations in Russian-occupied Crimea. Members felt that the biggest single challenge of the reform effort is endemic corruption, and stressed the need for progress on the economy and investment.

Lastly, Parliament welcomed the EU's active support and solidarity **in the energy sphere**, which allowed Russian gas deliveries to Ukraine to resume for the winter of 2015-2016. It called on Member States to exploit fully the transit potential of Ukraine and to strengthen cooperation in order to **secure the energy supply to both the EU and Ukraine**, and to avoid the building of new pipelines bypassing Ukraine, in particular the development of the Nord Stream II project for the delivery of Russian gas to Europe.