Implementation of the EU association agreement with Moldova

2017/2281(INI) - 14/11/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 396 votes to 76, with 18 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Moldova.

While stressing the importance of the AA/DCFTA and the progress achieved by Moldova to date in a number of areas, Members insisted, however, that full implementation of the AA/DCFTA, with regard, in particular, to political reforms, must be a top priority, enabling a further deepening of the country's relations with the EU, for the benefit of all Moldovan citizens.

Members are concerned the **country is backsliding in relations to democratic standards**, rule of law, lack of fair and transparent elections as well as impartial judiciary, insufficient anti-corruption and anti-money laundering efforts. Still, they praises those leading the efforts, which should be pursued, to reform the banking sector following the 2014 bank fraud of USD 1 billion.

According to the resolution, Moldova is captured by oligarchic interests with a concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a small group of people exerting their influence on parliament, the government, political parties, the state administration, the police, the judiciary and the media.

Particular concerns were made as regards the following

Elections: Parliament regretted Moldova's **deliberate violation** of political conditions related to democratic standards, in particular the recent changes in the **country's electoral legislation** (not taking into account some of the main recommendations of the joint opinion of the Venice Commission and the ODIHR) which led to the suspension of macro-financial assistance (MFA) and the remaining budget support payments.

Members believe that any decision on the **future MFA disbursement** should only be taken after the parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2019 and on condition that they are conducted in line with internationally recognised standards and assessed by specialised international bodies.

The payment of all budget support programmes should remain on hold until meaningful progress in democratic standards takes place including reform of the judiciary and judicial action against the persons responsible for the bank fraud. In the meantime, the Commission and the EEAS to continue reallocating funds to support civil society and independent media in Moldova, as well as the private sector and local authorities.

Members reaffirmed Parliament's readiness to observe Moldova's next parliamentary elections.

Media and civil society: the monopolisation of media and advertising market, the weakening of independent news outlets, the overdue implementation of the new audio visual code, the attempts to limit the freedom of action and discredit representatives of civil society were highlighted as areas of concern.

In particular, Members highlighted last minute changes to the Audiovisual Media Services Code adopted in July 2018 that were not subjected to consultations with civil society. They urged the Moldovan

authorities to fully implement the Code in line with European standards of media freedom and pluralism as recommended by the European Commission and the Venice Commission. They stressed the importance of ensuring genuine independence of the media regulatory agency.

Rule of law, good governance, human rights: concerned about the selective justice practices of the Moldovan judiciary, Parliament urged the Moldovan authorities to ensure the **independence, impartiality and effectiveness** of the judiciary and specialised institutions in the fight against corruption. It expressed concern about the increased risk of money laundering following the early adoption of the 'fiscal reform package' in July 2018, which includes a tax amnesty regime which may legalise illegally acquired assets. It also stressed the need to tackle organised crime as well.

Parliament also insisted on the need to:

- intensify efforts to defend human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the protection of vulnerable groups, by combating hate speech, violence, social exclusion and discrimination against LGBTQI people as well as people with disabilities and minorities, such as the Roma;
- ensure effective compliance with trade and sustainable development clauses and international commitments, and in particular the proper application of the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- take more determined action on environmental protection, waste management and climate change.