Annual implementing report on the EU association agreement with Moldova

2019/2201(INI) - 20/10/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted by 554 votes to 70, with 65 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with the Republic of Moldova.

With the association agreement and the deep and comprehensive free trade area, the EU and Moldova has committed to promoting political association and achieving economic integration. It has committed itself to incorporating the EU acquis into its own laws and practices in a wide range of areas.

To support these efforts, the Union is committed to providing substantial financial and budgetary assistance to Moldova, provided that fundamental European values and principles, such as the rule of law, human rights and democratic rights, are respected.

Common values and general principles

Members reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting Moldova's European path through political association, economic integration and related reforms. However, they called for progress to be made, in particular by focusing on the independence of public institutions and their resilience against the influence of oligarchs, the fight against corruption, the judiciary, strengthening the rule of law and improving citizens' living conditions.

Parliament welcomed the release of the second instalment of the Union's macro-financial assistance programme for 2017-2020. It considered that this disbursement should be followed by efforts in areas related to the strengthening of the anti-money laundering framework and the independence of the national bank.

Fair elections

Members called on the Moldovan authorities to ensure free and fair presidential elections scheduled on 1 November 2020. The authorities should also:

- refrain from altering rules and regulations for political gain, which will always end in political unrest and instability affecting the commitment for structural reforms;

- strengthen democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system, and to ensure free, independent and pluralistic media;

- strengthen resilience against disinformation and information manipulation by domestic and foreign actors, online and offline;

Reforms and institutional framework

While welcoming the reforms that led to the introduction of a visa-free regime with the Union, Members are concerned about the rise of the number of Moldovan nationals found to be illegally staying in the Schengen+ area (47% rise) and about the rise in asylum applications (48% rise). They urged Moldovan

authorities to further implement the commitments made in the context of the liberalised visa regime for the Schengen area in the area of effective migration management and to ensure asylum rights for third-country applicants in the Republic of Moldova.

Rule of law and good governance

Concerned by the low level of trust in the integrity and effectiveness of the judiciary and by the susceptibility of the judicial branch to political pressure which hampers its independence, Members called on the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to ensure transparency in the judicial appointment processes. They urged the Moldovan authorities to strengthen the complete independence of the Constitutional Court and to ensure that it is not subject to any form of political interference. They also called for increased efforts to fight organised crime and dismantle criminal organisations.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms

The resolution acknowledged the improvement of the legislation on the protection of human rights, notably as a result of the new 2018-2022 Human Rights Action Plan. Members called on the Moldovan authorities to significantly increase their efforts in this area, in particular to protect vulnerable groups, such as women and children abused by human traffickers, linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, Roma and LGBT+ people, and to recognise respect for human rights as an essential condition for democratic societies.

Members expressed deep concern at the situation of Moldovans stranded in EU Member States due to the COVID-19 crisis without social protection.

Cooperation in the field of the common foreign and security policy (CFSP)

Parliament welcomed Moldova's participation in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations on cyber security. It recognised the importance of the European Union's Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) in harmonising border management and customs regime to that of the Union, as well as finding a solution of the Transnistrian issue.

Institutional provisions

Lastly, the EU institutions and the Member States are, in close cooperation with the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, urged to better communicate the benefits of the AA/DCFTA and the EU assistance to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. The Commission should strengthen the Delegation of the European Union to the

Republic of Moldova.