Annual implementing report on the EU association agreement with the Republic of Moldova

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The European Parliament adopted by 512 votes to 43, with 39 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the EU Association Agreement with the Republic of Moldova.

Members welcomed Moldova's application to join the EU on 3 March 2022. They called on the EU institutions to **grant EU candidate status to Moldova, together with Ukraine and Georgia** and, in the meantime, to continue to work towards its integration into the EU single market. The Commission and the EEAS are invited to intensify their dialogue with their Moldovan counterparts and to strengthen their political, technical and financial support to Moldova during this crucial period in order to further accelerate progress and to ensure adequate absorption capacity of EU assistance.

The Commission is also invited to (i) assist Moldova in developing a **credible pre-accession strategy** for EU membership; (ii) adopt regular comprehensive annual reports assessing the implementation of reforms based on clear benchmarks and using the same methodology as that applied to the Western Balkan countries.

Members welcomed the new economic reform programme for Moldova, approved by the International Monetary Fund in December 2021, which paves the way for the Commission's new proposal for a MFA package for Moldova of up to EUR 150 million.

Reforms and institutional framework

Parliament welcomed the government's ambitious reform agenda and the progress already made in its implementation, in particular as regards the fight against corruption, transparency in public governance, progress in rule of law and digitalisation reforms, improving the living standards of the most vulnerable populations and improving the business climate in the country. It reiterated that sufficient progress in implementing the agreed reforms is a key condition for continued EU financial support and the application of the ‘more for more’ principle.

Members encouraged the Moldovan government to continue its efforts to **irreversibly align the country with the EU** and called on the authorities and the opposition to work constructively together to transform their country into a functioning state.

Energy security and resilience

Parliament stressed that it is unacceptable to use gas supplies as a tool to exert political pressure on the Moldovan government to change its geopolitical orientation. It called on the Commission and the EEAS to include Moldova in the EU plans to seek energy supply independence from Russia and to increase EU financial and technical support to Moldova, which is necessary to **ensure its resilience against such external interference and reduce its heavy dependence on Russian energy**. It called on the EU to show greater energy solidarity with Moldova by strengthening energy infrastructure interconnections between the EU and the countries of the region.

The Commission is invited to continue to support the integration of Moldova and Ukraine into the European continental electricity grid and to urgently set up a dedicated structure within its administration for this purpose.

Cooperation in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and progress on resolving the Transnistria conflict

The resolution encouraged the EEAS and Moldova to develop cooperation on issues such as combating hybrid threats, improved resilience, enhanced cyber security, increased protection of critical infrastructure and improved strategic communication. Moldova is invited to continue to **align its positions with those of the CFSP** and to continue and improve its contribution to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and its missions.

Parliament rejected the statement of 3 March 2022 by the authorities of the occupied Transnistrian region of Moldova announcing an end to the settlement process and calling for the recognition of Transnistria's so-called 'independence'. It reiterated its support for a **comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict** through a negotiation process, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova, within its internationally recognised borders, and providing for a special status for the Transnistrian region within a viable Moldovan state. Any solution to the Transnistria issue should respect Moldova's sovereign right to choose its own defence and foreign policy directions.

Rule of law, good governance, human rights

Parliament reaffirmed the fundamental importance of **judicial reform**, in particular strengthening the independence and competences of the judiciary, and the fight against corruption. The European Union should offer more support, including increased financial allocations, for the reform of the judicial system in Moldova.

The Moldovan government is invited to strengthen the effectiveness of the legal and institutional anti-corruption infrastructure, to enhance transparency, democratic control and accountability of decision-making processes and to cooperate closely with civil society. It is also important to fight financial fraud, money laundering and organised crime through comprehensive legislation and its effective implementation.

Parliament welcomed Moldova's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) on 14 October 2021. It called for ensuring the effective implementation of the Convention at all levels. The Commission and the EEAS should mainstream gender equality in all their policies, programmes and activities concerning Moldova.

Trade and economic cooperation

Parliament reaffirmed the importance of effectively implementing the reforms needed to take **full advantage of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area** (DCFTA), to make progress in further economic integration into the EU internal market and to increase the diversification and competitiveness of Moldova's economy, in particular of high value-added goods.

Members considered that the EU market is bound to become even more important for Moldova owing to the trade disruptions caused by Russia's war against Ukraine. They encouraged further progress in areas such as the customs code, the protection of intellectual property rights, the improvement of sanitary and phytosanitary standards, the improvement of market conditions in the field of energy, public procurement and access to finance for SMEs.

The Commission is invited to begin the **process of integrating the EaP countries into the European single market** by taking the first step through analysing their alignment from a legal, economic and technical perspective, and developing regulations and standards aimed at preparing partner countries for economic integration into a common market.

Social rights

Noting that underemployment and precarious employment remain high in Moldova, Parliament called for the adoption of a recovery strategy that meets the needs of the population and integrates the green transition and sustainable development. Expressing concern about the **large-scale emigration** of Moldovan citizens, it encouraged the Moldovan government to implement new measures to prevent and counter this phenomenon, by creating opportunities for young workers and improving their working conditions and wages.