Temporary trade-liberalisation measures supplementing trade concessions applicable to Moldovan products under the EU/Moldova Association Agreement

2023/0144(COD) - 11/07/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 577 votes to 36, with 18 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on temporary trade liberalisation measures additional to the trade concessions applicable to Moldovan products under the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part.

The European Parliament adopted its position at first reading taking over the Commission's proposal.

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, which has been ongoing since 24 February 2022, has a profoundly negative impact on the ability of the Republic of Moldova to trade with the rest of the world, in particular because exports from the Republic of Moldova rely on transit via Ukrainian territory and using Ukrainian infrastructure, which are currently largely unavailable.

Under such critical circumstances and to mitigate the negative effects on Moldova’s economy of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, the regulation proposes to **renew and extend these trade liberalisation measures for a period of one year** from the date of expiry of the current measures (25 July 2023).

Under the proposed regulation, **all outstanding tariffs under Title V of the Association Agreement will be suspended**. This concerns fruits and vegetables subject to the entry-price system and to tariff-rate quotas, namely tomatoes, garlic, table grapes, apples, cherries, plums and grape juice.

Trade liberalisation measures are subject to the following conditions:

- Moldova's compliance with the rules of origin of products and the related procedures set out in the Association Agreement;

- Moldova abstaining from introducing new duties or charges having equivalent effect or new quantitative restrictions or measures having equivalent effect for imports originating in the Union, from increasing the levels of existing duties or charges or introducing any other restrictions, including discriminatory internal administrative measures, unless clearly justified in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; and

- Moldova's respect for **democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms**, as well as the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, related materials and their means of delivery, respect for the principles of the rule of law and good governance, the fight against corruption, organised and unorganised crime, including transnational crime, and terrorism, and respect for the principles of sustainable development and effective multilateralism as provided for in the Association Agreement.

The regulation also includes an **expedited safeguard mechanism** that can be activated in order to protect the Union market in case of adverse effects.

These temporary and exceptional measures will facilitate and support the existing trade flows from Moldova to the Union and help Moldova’s economy.

Considering the economic situation in the Republic of Moldova, the regulation should, as a matter of urgency, enter into force on 25 July 2023.