

Speech
of Mr. Vladimir VORONIN, President of the Republic of Moldova, in front of the members of
the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament and of the members of the
Delegation for Cooperation with Moldova
(The 8th of June, Strasbourg)

Honoured audience,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend the plenary session of the European Parliament, as well as this meeting, and it is an honour for the Republic of Moldova. The importance of the items on the agenda of the plenary session adds value to the offered opportunity for which I thank you.

Since the symbolic charge of Strasbourg, a European city by definition, has almost no equal, the fact that our meeting takes place namely in this city has a very special meaning for me.

The Republic of Moldova has made an important step towards realization of its European aspirations when it has reiterated its commitment to European values and principles in front of the Council of Europe. It will be here that we will first go through fire on our way to European integration; we shall be put to the test of democracy and of the state of law. These two supreme values are fundamental for European integration of Moldova, which takes constant measures for their consolidation and development. By promoting values and ideals of integrated Europe, which we undoubtedly share, we reveal our European character and, at the same time, contribute to the intensification of unity and viability of Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are a part of Europe and it were only the historical conditions that have impeded the development of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with the integration processes on the continent. European integration is not a goal in itself for Moldova. It is a natural manifestation of its aspiration towards stability, prosperity and security, guaranteed by a modern democratic state with developed economy and civil society. European integration for us is the acknowledgement of the fact that we belong to the European civilisation and culture, as well as of our ability to contribute to the consolidation of European unity by means of specific and efficient actions at the sub-regional, regional and European level

In this context, the recognition of European perspective of the Republic of Moldova, in fact, means the acceptance of its role and responsibility in ensuring security and prosperity of Europe, of which Moldova undoubtedly is a part. The fact that Moldova will be given European perspectives will not affect in any way the interests of the European Union and I count on the support and understanding, which the members of the European Parliament have always shown in this respect.

European integration is an irreversible and priority option of the Moldovan society, that wants it materialised as soon as possible, but, at the same time, it takes this option realistically, which is manifested first of all by the process of implementation of the Moldova-EU Action Plan.

The fact that during the first session of the newly elected Parliament all the parliamentary fractions have unanimously adopted the Declaration to Support the Objective of European

Integration of Moldova is a clear proof of the consensus among Moldovan political class concerning the vector of development of the country. ‘

Our optimism regarding the success of the aspirations of Moldova is determined by the trust in the firm desire of the whole of Moldovan society to mobilise all the resources in order to achieve this goal. It is an ambitious, but attainable goal. Having successfully implemented the Action Plan we shall meet all the necessary criteria for a new contractual relationships with the EU, stipulated in this document. The speed and the quality of implementation of the Action Plan mostly depend on Moldova that is why we are concentrating on reforms and fulfilment of the commitments that we shall take.

Passing a set of important laws for ensuring impartiality and independence of justice; subscribing this summer to a number of International Conventions included in the Action Plan; Code of Execution coming into force; joining the Bologna Process; decision to accept Moldova as a full-fledged member of the SEECP; Parliament passing the Law on the Mechanism of Harmonization of Domestic Legislation with the European One; the fact that Working Groups to develop legislation in the priority areas of the Action Plan (audiovisual, justice, mass media, local public administration, public financial control, activity of the security services) have been set up and work in the Parliament – all these are specific examples of efforts taken to implement the Action Plan.

In the same context I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the European Parliament for the constructive interest towards recent elections in Moldova and to inform you that the recommendations of the international monitoring mission are already being taken into consideration during the preparation of the local elections in July current year. There has been created a working group to modify the Election Code. A new Conception of Reflecting the Local Election Campaign in the Audiovisual, which included the majority of recommendations of the observers as well as civil society observations, has been adopted. A draft law on funding political parties, developed in accordance with the directives of the Council of Europe, will be presented in autumn.

At the same time, consolidation and promotion of democratic values and of the state of law are not only a priority of the domestic policy, but also a primary objective of international and regional cooperation of Moldova.

The revival of relationships with Romania and the Ukraine in the spirit of neighbourliness opens new perspectives for increasing the benefits of bilateral cooperation and ensuring security and stability in the region, first of all by solving the Transnistria problem.

This is, undoubtedly, the key issue of both Moldovan state system and of the possibility itself for my country to aspire to a European future. Despite certain stagnation and diplomatic deadlocks in solving this conflict, after the destiny-making revolution in the Ukraine, there appeared realistic prerequisites for a positive dynamics of this issue. It is no secret that the previous leadership of the Ukraine used to cooperate with the separatist leadership in Tiraspol quite openly. They used to shut their eyes to both the authoritarian character of power in Transnistria and on undisguised smuggling on the Transnistrian sector of the border between Moldova and the Ukraine. Now the situation is gradually and inevitably changing for the better. The energy and consistency of President Yushchenko, the initiatives of the new Ukrainian leadership allow us to hope that the Transnistrian issue may be settled in the foreseeable future. Moreover, according to the Ukrainian plan, it is for the first time that it has been suggested to use democratisation mechanisms to solve the territorial problem. I am sure that this is the right key to

the solution of the problem. We cannot help but support the Ukrainian plan and the enthusiasm itself of the President Yushchenko.

Of course, there are quite a number of gaps in the suggested plan. For example, there is absolutely nothing in it about the withdrawal of Russian troupes and demilitarisation of the region as a condition of fair settlement of Transnistrian problem. The criteria of democratisation of the Transnistrian region also have not been clearly defined in the Plan. Though, I believe that these basic elements of settlement must appear as additional efforts of international community and specifically in the context of the Ukrainian initiative. It is evident to us that democratisation in Transnistria first of all means liquidation of political police in the region, the so-called MSS (Ministry of State Security), which terrorises people. It means removing barriers to free activity of political parties and of media. It means liquidation of pressing against civil society and liberation of political prisoners. Since the Ukrainian plan of democratisation of Transnistria pays much attention to the use of elections in the regional parliament, we believe that the democratic character of such elections, as well as the elections themselves, must be ensured by an international election committee under the OSCE mandate, and the monitoring of political processes should start several months before the elections.

We hope that the Ukrainian plan to settle the conflict will be realised specifically in such a context. We are grateful to the Ukraine for such an unusual way of bringing up the settlement issue. Nowadays it is carried out in accordance with the spirit and the letter of European values and principles. It is important to mention that I and President Yushchenko are also achieving understanding on the most painful issue in the relationships between the two countries, namely in the issue of securing the Transnistrian segment of the border between Moldova and the Ukraine. On the 2nd of June we both have signed a letter, addressed to Mr. Barroso and Mr. Solana, asking for assistance in organising international control of the Transnistrian segment of the Moldovan – Ukrainian border. We hope very much that the European Union will respond to this initiative of ours, especially since it is actually becoming a direct participant in the process of settlement of the conflict.

We count very much on the contribution of the activity of the Special Representative of the EU for Moldova to the settlement of the Transnistria problem in accordance with the principles of international law, of territorial integrity and state sovereignty, as well as on the increased interest of our regional partners, Romania and the Ukraine included.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moldova attaches special importance to the Action Plan as a mechanism that will encourage completion of full implementation of Cooperation and Partnership Agreement. However, the Action Plan has a much greater value added because of the perspectives that it will open if fully realised.

Moldova believes that the implementation of the Action Plan and the preparation for raising the level of its contractual relationship with the EU are complementary processes. We welcome the ultimate objective of the European Neighbour Policy, which is non-admission of new dividing lines in Europe, though we believe that the European Neighbour Policy does not substitute the aspiration of Moldova for European integration and the term “neighbour” in the title of an eventual new Agreement reflects neither the aspirations of the Republic of Moldova, nor the character of its relationships with the EU.

Last but not the least I would like to express the gratitude for the constructive relationships that have been established with the members of the European Parliament, especially with the

Delegation for the relations with Moldova, that has made specific steps to show its availability to help us.

The way of European integration is a complex and difficult one. We count on your support and understanding to go through it successfully.

Moldova is a part of Europe. We believe in the vitality of Europe, in its force to find solutions that would allow it to ensure a stable, safe and prosperous future. We see the future of the democratic, integral and modern Moldova in the future of the unified and indivisible Europe.

Thank you.