



## **EU-MOLDOVA PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE**

First Meeting

21-22 September 2015

### **FINAL STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Pursuant to Article 441 (3) of the Association Agreement*

Under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Andi Cristea on behalf of the European Parliament and of Mr Vladimir Filat on behalf of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter "Moldova"), the first meeting of the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC) was held in Brussels on 21-22 September 2015. The Parliamentary Association Committee, having considered the state of play of EU-Moldova relations and the first year of provisional implementation of the Association Agreement, agreed upon the following final statement and recommendations.

The Parliamentary Association Committee:

1. Expresses great satisfaction about the signature of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement with its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area in June 2014 and its provisional application as of 1 September 2014; recalls that Moldova ratified the Agreement on 2d July 2014, that the European Parliament ratified it on 13 November 2014, and that to date 24 EU Member states completed the ratification process; calls upon Belgium, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands to complete this process without delay; emphasises that the Association Agreement covers the entire internationally recognised territory of the Republic of Moldova, and is for the benefit of the whole population;
2. Reminds of the aim of the Association Agreement of significantly deepening political and economic relations between Moldova and the EU; stresses that a full implementation of the agreement will bring tangible improvements to Moldovan citizens in their daily life in areas such as education, employment and justice, and increase their living standards and their security;
3. Stresses that the signature and ratification of the Association Agreement does not constitute a final goal in EU-Republic of Moldova relations and points out that pursuant to Article 49 TEU, the Republic of Moldova has a European perspective and may apply to become a member of the European Union provided it adheres to the principles of democracy, respects fundamental freedoms and minority rights, and ensures the rule of law;
4. Welcomes the formation in July 2015 of a new government based on a wider coalition than the previous government and confirming the pro-European course of the country; stresses that predictability and stability of the political process and enduring consensus on reforms are of paramount importance to Moldova's European aspirations and are key to effectively implement the Association agreement and to address real concerns and demands of the population;
5. Commends the work already carried out by the Moldovan authorities in implementing the association agenda, in advancing sectoral reforms and in bringing Moldovan law into line with the EU acquis; takes note of the approval by the Moldovan government of amendments and additions to

the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Association Agreement for 2014-2016 on 26 August 2015;

6. Expresses however concerns over Moldova's financial and banking sector, which constitutes an impediment to the implementation of the Association Agreement and poses a risk to the stable economic development of the country; reiterates the fact that in order to enhance public credibility in the reform process, Moldovan institutions need to address the ongoing situation in the banking sector by ensuring full transparency of the inquiries, recovery of all stolen liquid assets and the bringing before justice of all the persons responsible; highlights that these measures are absolutely crucial to regain the trust in the Moldovan banking sector; stresses furthermore the need for Moldova to address with renewed strength the fight against corruption, the reform of judiciary and the issue of governance and transparency; invites therefore the new government to tackle these problems as an absolute priority;

7. Welcomes the successful implementation of the visa free regime as well as the progress achieved in the cooperation in the field of energy, in particular with the inauguration of the Iasi-Ungheni gas interconnector in August 2014 and the start of gas delivery from Romania to Moldova in March 2015; stresses that in order to reduce energy dependency from Russia and diversify supply sources the extension of the current pipeline towards Chisinau is essential; calls on efforts to achieve rapid progress in the implementation of the Ungheni-Chisinau pipeline; calls on the Moldovan Parliament to promptly adopt the legislation in compliance with the 3rd Energy Package; welcomes further the participation of Moldova in an increasing number of EU programmes; as well as the amended regulation on Autonomous Trade Preferences that help Moldova, suffering from import bans against its agricultural products, reorient its export markets to the EU, thus providing immediate social and economic relief while also representing a support measure to reform process and efforts;

8. Calls on Chisinau and Tiraspol to intensify their efforts to find an effective solution for the settlement of the Transnistria issue in the framework of the 5+2 talks and to take concrete steps to improve the livelihoods of the population; encourages the negotiating parties to agree on a renewed direct dialogue and to convene a new round of 5+2 talks during the course of 2015;

9. Is aware of the efforts and the amount of resources needed for a gradual approximation of the Moldovan legislation with the EU acquis; welcomes therefore the substantial increase in EU assistance provided to the Republic of Moldova in recent years, with up to € 410 million available for the period 2014-2017 and the possibility to receive additional funding in the light of progress achieved in the area of democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedom; draws the attention however that the EU financing should be based on tangible and measurable progress in the areas concerned and that implementation of projects should take into account the principles of transparency, efficiency and sound management; welcomes further the bilateral assistance provided by EU Member states and encourages all donors to coordinate the programming of their assistance;

10. Underlines the role of the parliament of the Republic of Moldova in the adoption of the required legislation as well as in the political oversight of the executive in the implementation of the Agreement; recalls that according to the Constitution of Moldova, the government is politically accountable for its actions in front of the Parliament;

11. Stresses that fulfilling these functions requires good coordination mechanisms within the parliament of the Republic of Moldova and a well-trained staff; suggests that a Member of Parliament be appointed for the coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement;
12. Welcomes the decision of the European Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group to select Moldova as a priority country for parliamentary capacity-building; underlines that the corresponding programme should focus on the ability of the Moldovan parliament to efficiently fulfil its role in the implementation of the Association Agreement;
13. Underlines that Moldova's civil society has a key role to play in monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement and the related government's and parliament's action; stresses therefore that civil society organisations should be given the means and ability to efficiently fulfil this role; emphasises the importance of the Civil Society Platform foreseen by the Association Agreement and hopes for its swift establishment; commends the work undertaken in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum;
14. Welcomes the holding of the first EU-Moldova Association Council that took place in March 2015; invites the Association Council to adopt at each of its meetings operational conclusions regarding the implementation of the Association agreement; recalls that the Parliamentary Association Committee shall be informed of the decisions and recommendations of the Association Council; stresses that, in order to be able to meaningfully contribute to the implementation process, the Parliamentary Association Committee should further be kept informed about the work of the Association Committee and Sub-Committees;
15. Highlights the need for a comprehensive information campaign geared at the public on the aims and content of the Association agreement and the direct and concrete benefits for citizens arising from its implementation; underlines the importance of promoting objective, independent and impartial information in this regard, and of enhancing the capacity of the EU to counter misinformation and propaganda campaigns against itself and its Neighbourhood policy; welcomes therefore the efforts made by the EU to enhance its strategic communication and encourages Moldova's authorities to participate in these efforts as well;
16. Expresses its intention to actively contribute, as the official forum for interparliamentary relations between the European Parliament and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, to the implementation of the Association Agreement, inter alia by
  - closely monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement and identifying areas in which the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova could most benefit from the EU-Moldovan interparliamentary dialogue and work; establishing appropriate contacts and measures;
  - following the EU assistance delivered to the Republic of Moldova, to make sure that it is geared towards the implementation of the Association Agenda; where relevant, preparing recommendations to the Commission and EEAS in this area for examination by the competent bodies of the European Parliament;



- contributing to raising public awareness and visibility of the merits of the Association Agreement, including by means of regular contacts with civil society, interviews with Moldova's media;

17. Intends to hold the next meeting of the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee in early Spring 2016 in Moldova.