



Plenary sitting

B9-0407/2023

2.10.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on taking stock of Moldova's path to the EU
(2023/2838(RSP))

Emmanuel Maurel
on behalf of The Left Group

European Parliament resolution on taking stock of Moldova's path to the EU (2023/2838(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 49 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the European Council decision of 23 June 2022 to grant EU candidate country status to Moldova,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 17 June 2022 entitled ‘Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova’s application for membership of the European Union’ (COM(2022)0406),
 - having regard to the joint staff working document of 6 February 2023 entitled ‘Association Implementation Report on the Republic of Moldova’, reviewing Moldova’s implementation of reforms under the EU-Moldova Association Agreement since October 2021 (SWD(2023)0041),
 - having regard to the Commission analytical report of 1 February 2023 on Moldova’s alignment with the EU *acquis* and the country’s overall ability to uphold the obligations of membership (SWD(2023)0032),
 - having regard to the interim opinion of the Venice Commission of 13 March 2023 on the draft law on limiting excessive economic and political influence in public life (de-oligarchisation),
 - having regard to the oral update given on 22 June 2023 by EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi regarding Moldova’s progress on reform,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe; whereas estimates suggest that 1 150 000 Moldovans have left the country – 28.7 % of the total population; whereas Moldova’s economy is heavily dependent on remittances; whereas the decline in remittances as a result of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, combined with a shrinking and ageing population, has resulted in a significant number of low-income households becoming dependent on pensions and social assistance;
- B. whereas Moldova’s complex history of being part of, and suffering at the hands of, various powers is traditionally reflected in the political views and geopolitical preferences of its ruling class and population; whereas Moldovan society has been continuously divided between aligning with the West or with Russia; whereas oligarchs still have an excessive influence of vested interests in economic, political and public life in Moldova;
- C. whereas Moldova is preparing for a series of elections, namely national and local

elections in autumn 2023, presidential elections in 2024 and parliamentary elections in 2025;

- D. whereas the Republic of Moldova has been disproportionately affected by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, mainly owing to the arrival of more than 474 000 Ukrainian refugees and more than 76 000 third-country nationals since February 2022, which is the highest number per capita of all countries that have received refugees from Ukraine, but also because of lost trade and increased energy and transport prices; whereas more than 102 000 refugees have chosen to stay in the country, nearly 48 000 of whom are under the age of 18; whereas the response of the Moldovan Government and people to this situation was and remains an example of solidarity with those fleeing war;
- E. whereas in 2022, Moldova experienced the most serious energy crisis in its history after Ukraine stopped exporting electricity because of Russian airstrikes on critical infrastructure and Russian energy giant Gazprom cut gas deliveries by half; whereas, as a result, inflation in one of the poorest countries in Europe has hit 34 %, leading to a tenfold increase in utility bills compared to 2021;
- F. whereas Russian cruise missiles have violated Moldovan airspace and territory several times; whereas Russian President Vladimir Putin revoked a 2012 decree committing Russia to finding a solution for the Transnistria region, based on respect for Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity; whereas on 2 February 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned that Moldova may meet the same fate as Ukraine – being invaded by Russia – if Moldovan President Maia Sandu considers uniting Moldova with Romania and joining NATO;
- G. whereas the energy and security crises also resulted in overwhelming support from international partners; whereas the EU has provided a comprehensive support package mobilising over EUR 1.2 billion in loans and grants since October 2021 to strengthen Moldova's resilience, including budget support, macro-financial assistance, humanitarian aid and assistance under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism; whereas the EU also provided support by connecting Moldova to the Continental European grid; whereas the EU has implemented temporary trade-liberalisation measures to support Moldova's economy by granting annual duty-free tariff-rate quotas to overcome the loss of its export markets in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine; whereas the EU has approved a new support package for Moldova and the proposal for the review of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework highlights that around EUR 600 million in funding under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) could be redeployed for 2024-2027 programmes to increase support for neighbourhood countries, including Moldova;
- H. whereas on 17 February 2023, a new government led by Dorin Recean was sworn in, which will focus more on the security dimension of the current crisis than on economic development and the cost-of-living crisis;
- I. whereas since the first protest on 8 September 2022, protests have continued to take place in Moldova; whereas protesters are demanding that the government fully subsidise citizens' winter energy bills, that it 'not involve the country in war' and that the

country's pro-Western government resign;

- J. whereas after the Moldovan Parliament voted to change the national language from Moldovan to Romanian, the opposition organised a protest against this change in front of the Constitutional Court of Moldova;
- K. whereas on 26 March 2023, a group of protesters gathered in front of the Stephen the Great Monument in Chişinău, demanding the unification of Moldova and Romania;
- L. whereas on 13 February 2023, Moldova's President warned of a planned Russian *coup d'état* in the country; whereas Prime Minister Dorin Recean reacted to the protests by suggesting that the protesters go to work and stating that, following the justice reform, the organisers of the protests and their illegal financiers will be brought to justice;
- M. whereas the Moldovan Government has adopted a series of controversial laws, including new legislation strengthening the powers of its Security and Intelligence Service, which was criticised by the Venice Commission, and a ban on several television channels;
- N. whereas on 19 June 2023, the Constitutional Court of Moldova banned the opposition party Şor, which was accused of acting in contradiction to the rule of law and endangering the sovereignty and independence of Moldova;
- O. whereas on 28 April 2023, the EU established, at Moldova's request, a framework for targeted restrictive measures against persons responsible for supporting or implementing actions that undermine or threaten the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova;
- P. whereas Amnesty International's report on Moldova in 2022 states that no visible progress has been made in reducing instances of torture and other ill-treatment in detention, that impunity continues for past human rights violations by law enforcement agencies, that new 'temporary' restrictions on public assemblies have been introduced, that the rights of LGBTI people have not been fully realised, leading to cases of harassment, discrimination and violence, that some refugee reception centres have turned away refugees belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, and that prosecution and imprisonment for peaceful dissent continue in the breakaway Transnistria region;
- Q. whereas the Commission opinion on Moldova's application for EU membership outlined nine steps that Moldova must take in order to progress on the path towards EU accession, namely comprehensively reforming its justice system, implementing the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission, fighting corruption, implementing its commitment to de-oligarchisation, fighting organised crime, reforming its public administration, improving the management of its public finances, involving civil society, and strengthening the protection of human rights
- R. whereas the Commission's oral interim update on enlargement of June 2023 recognised the progress made by Moldova on three of the nine conditions set by the Commission, with much more work remaining to be done on fighting corruption and organised crime

and on reforming the country's public administration;

1. Expresses its solidarity with the people of Moldova, who are experiencing significant economic, political and security challenges as a result of the war in Ukraine; applauds the Moldovan Government and people for their remarkable solidarity with the refugees;
2. Reiterates its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova, within its internationally recognised borders; condemns violations of the territorial integrity of Moldova and any efforts to undermine its stability;
3. Reiterates its support for a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for the Transnistrian region; encourages the implementation of all confidence-building measures designed to avoid destabilisation; believes that a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict is an essential component of Moldova's EU accession process;
4. Reminds the Moldovan Government that peaceful protests are one of the most critical elements of a functioning democracy and calls for it to guarantee the freedoms of expression and assembly and to refrain from discrediting critical voices;
5. Expresses its concern about the deterioration of the political situation in Moldova, which could lead to further divisions in Moldovan society;
6. Highlights the need to speed up the introduction of the new guaranteed minimum wage for all and to improve social protection; reiterates its criticism that the implementation of the social *acquis* is underrepresented in the Commission's assessments and recommendations and calls for this situation to be changed;
7. Welcomes the fulfilment by the Moldovan Government of three of the conditions set by the Commission, and the progress made in the other areas;
8. Welcomes the efforts of the Moldovan Government to meet the 'de-oligarchisation' requirement set out in the Commission opinion on Moldova's application for EU membership; urges the Moldovan authorities, however, to fully address the Venice Commission's recommendations on adopting a systemic approach aimed at strengthening the country's institutions and legislation relating to monopolies, competition policy, political parties, elections, taxation, corruption and money laundering;
9. Welcomes the initial measures taken to fight corruption; calls for strengthened cooperation between the Member States and the Moldovan authorities in investigating the 2014 bank fraud scandal and, in particular, in ensuring the repatriation of stolen assets and prosecuting those responsible;
10. Stresses that there is no 'fast track' for EU membership and that accession remains a merit-based and structured process requiring the fulfilment of all EU membership criteria; believes that accession negotiations can only take place when all nine conditions set by the Commission have been met in full;

11. Acknowledges the significant support provided by the EU to help the Moldovan people cope with the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, namely to successfully manage the refugee and energy crises, as well as inflation; calls for the EU to continue supporting Moldova;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Moldova.