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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0411/2023**

2.10.2023

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statements by 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))

**Siegfried Mureșan, Andrzej Halicki, Michael Gahler, Rasa Juknevičienė, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Andrius Kubilius, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Traian Băsescu, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Daniel Buda, Cristian-Silviu Bușoi, Gheorghe Falcă, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Danuta Maria Hübner, Sandra Kalniete, Andrey Kovatchev, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Lukas Mandl, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Gheorghe-Vlad Nistor, Radosław Sikorski, Eugen Tomac, Loránt Vincze, Iuliu Winkler**  
on behalf of the PPE Group

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

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Russia,
  - having regard to 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<sup>1</sup>, which includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and which fully entered into force on 1 July 2016,
  - having regard to the Republic of Moldova's application for EU membership of 3 March 2022, and the European Council's consequent granting of candidate status on 23 June 2022 based on a positive assessment by the Commission and in line with the views expressed by Parliament,
  - having regard to the Commission opinion of 17 June 2022 on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the European Union (COM(2022)0406), the Council conclusions of 23 and 24 June 2022 on the membership applications of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, the Commission analytical report of 1 February 2023 on Moldova's alignment with the EU *acquis* (SWD(2023)0032), and the joint staff working document of 6 February 2023 entitled 'Association Implementation Report on the Republic of Moldova' (SWD(2023)0041),
  - having regard to the joint statement following the seventh meeting of the EU-Moldova Association Council of 7 February 2023 and to the final statement of the 13th meeting of the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee of 23 March 2023,
  - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 23 March 2023 and of 29 and 30 June 2023,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Republic of Moldova has condemned Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine since the beginning and has supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine; whereas the Republic of Moldova has been disproportionately affected by the war, having had to cope with an influx of over 940 000 Ukrainian refugees – proportionately more than any other country – with over 118 000 of them still remaining in the country, while the Moldovan economy has been severely affected by lost trade, a decrease in foreign investment and increased energy and transport prices; whereas the Russian Federation, in cooperation with domestic Russian-sponsored actors, has galvanised and utilised the resultant economic uncertainty to delegitimise and foster opposition to the

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 260, 30.8.2014, p. 4.

Moldovan Government's pro-European policies;

- B. whereas Russia has used its gas exports as a tool to pressure the Moldovan Government, including on its pro-European orientation, by artificially creating a gas supply crisis since 2021; whereas Russia's weaponisation of energy has further exposed the fragility of the Moldovan energy sector, while the country's connections to the EU gas and electricity market and mechanisms have helped it to tackle the crisis; whereas high energy prices led to inflation rising to 30 % and Moldova's economic output fell by 5.9 % year-on-year in real terms in 2022; whereas although the Republic of Moldova has diversified its natural gas supplies away from Russia, its electricity supply remains largely dependent on the Russian-owned Cuciurgan power station in the Transnistria region;
- C. whereas the Russian Federation has been using provocation, disinformation, cyberattacks and other hybrid means to undermine the stability and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova; whereas in recent years, the Republic of Moldova has been dealing with an increase in disinformation from Russian and pro-Russian sources and media outlets; whereas Russia's subversive activities in the Moldovan information space also seek to undermine widespread popular support for temporarily displaced Ukrainians and the EU, tie down Ukrainian forces on the southern border and foster destabilisation; whereas Russia has also taken active measures to establish and promote front organisations disguised as non-governmental organisations and 'cultural centres', establish strong pro-Russian political and societal constituencies and return the Republic of Moldova to a state of dependency on Russian hydrocarbons; whereas Russian officials have repeatedly and falsely claimed that the Russian-speaking population in the Republic of Moldova is oppressed;
- D. whereas Russian missiles targeting Ukraine have flown over the Republic of Moldova's territory on several occasions, in clear violation of Moldova's sovereignty, and on several occasions Russian missile debris has fallen on Moldovan territory, causing damage and endangering the lives of civilians; whereas Moldova's air surveillance and defence is in urgent need of investment and modernisation and the Moldovan Government has asked its Western partners for air-defence systems;
- E. whereas on 28 April 2023, the Council decided to establish a new sanctions regime, in the light of actions destabilising the Republic of Moldova, targeting those supporting or implementing actions undermining or threatening the country's sovereignty, independence, democracy, rule of law, stability or security;
- F. whereas the Republic of Moldova's democracy has demonstrated its resilience in the face of Russian disinformation and propaganda during the recent government reshuffle despite increased Russian and Russian-sponsored subversive activity; whereas despite all these attempts at destabilisation, the Moldovan people and leadership have remained determined to follow the pro-European path they have chosen;
- G. whereas the Republic of Moldova submitted its application to join the EU on 3 March 2022, attesting to the determination of the Moldovan authorities and citizens to advance Moldova's European integration; whereas the Republic of Moldova is now a candidate country for EU membership;

- H. whereas on 22 June 2023, Olivér Várhelyi, the Enlargement Commissioner, provided an oral update to the Council on Moldova's progress, during which he concluded that Moldova has completed three steps out of the nine outlined by the Commission (by addressing the shortcomings identified by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Venice Commission on judiciary reform and reforms of the electoral code, by enhancing the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes, and by strengthening the protection of human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups, and enhancing gender equality and the fight against violence against women); whereas there has been good progress on three areas: justice reform, de-oligarchisation and public finance management reforms; whereas some progress has been achieved on anti-corruption efforts, the fight against organised crime and public administration reform;
- I. whereas the EU has provided the Republic of Moldova with more than EUR 1.2 billion in total in loans and grants since October 2021 to strengthen its resilience, including budget support, macro-financial assistance and humanitarian aid and assistance; whereas the macro-financial assistance has been increased by EUR 145 million, reaching a total of EUR 295 million, which will consist of EUR 220 million in loans and EUR 75 million in grants; whereas through the European Peace Facility, EUR 47 million has been allocated to expand the Moldovan armed forces and provide them with non-lethal equipment, supporting medical services, an engineering battalion and enhanced cyber-defence capabilities;
- J. whereas on 24 April 2023, the EU set up the Partnership Mission in Moldova under the common security and defence policy, with the objective of enhancing the security sector's resilience in crisis management, hybrid threats and countering foreign information manipulation and interference;
- K. whereas on 31 May 2023, EU and Moldovan telecoms operators signed a joint declaration facilitated by the Commission to voluntarily lower roaming tariffs from 1 January 2024 in order to allow 'roam like at home' for Moldovan citizens; whereas on 1 September 2023, the Commission adopted a proposal to incorporate roaming into the EU-Moldova Association Agreement;
- L. whereas the Republic of Moldova hosted the European Political Community summit in Chişinău on 1 June 2023, demonstrating its ambitious and resolute pro-European stance;
- M. whereas on 19 June 2023, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova declared the Şor Party unconstitutional and dissolved it;
- N. whereas on 28 June 2023, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the Commission, presented a support package for the Republic of Moldova aimed at addressing the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas the package focuses on five priorities: facilitating economic development and connectivity, supporting reforms, ensuring energy security, enhancing security and enhancing strategic communication;
- O. whereas on 20 July 2023, the EU granted another one-year extension, until 24 July 2024, of its temporary suspension of tariffs and entry-price systems still applicable to certain Moldovan agricultural products;

- P. whereas on 18 September 2023, Moldova joined the EU Civil Protection Mechanism as a participating state;
1. Stands in solidarity with the people of the Republic of Moldova during this difficult period and reiterates its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova; strongly condemns Russia's repeated attempts to destabilise the Republic of Moldova, its government and society, including through the use of hybrid means, the weaponisation of energy supplies, the repeated violations of its airspace, disinformation campaigns, staged protests and the threat of use of force;
  2. Welcomes the broad popular support in the the Republic of Moldova for its European integration, as shown in the most recent opinion polls and as seen at the European Moldova National Assembly on 21 May 2023, where over 80 000 people gathered in the Great National Assembly Square in Chişinău to express their support for the European future of Moldova;
  3. Demands that the Russian authorities respect the Republic of Moldova's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and cease their provocations and attempts to destabilise the country;
  4. Welcomes the Moldovan authorities' clear condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and welcomes the government's pledge to align with the EU's restrictive measures against Russia; calls on the Commission to assist Moldova in implementing these sanctions and to provide support to mitigate any negative consequences; commends Moldova's continued solidarity with the people fleeing Ukraine on account of Russia's war of aggression; welcomes, in this regard, the fact that Moldova joined the EU Civil Protection Mechanism as a participating state;
  5. Acknowledges the efforts of the current leadership of the Republic of Moldova in embarking on fundamental reforms that are pivotal for the upcoming European integration of the country; commends the resilience and determination of the Republic of Moldova and its people, despite the challenges posed by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and commends their unwavering efforts to relaunch the economy, which has started growing again following the 2022 recession caused by the war, inflation, the energy crisis and a severe drought;
  6. Reaffirms its commitment to the Republic of Moldova's membership of the European Union; believes that it would constitute a geostrategic investment in a united and strong Europe; recognises the government's progress in terms of reforms and level of alignment with the EU *acquis* and encourages it to step up work towards the full and effective implementation of the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area;
  7. Looks forward to the Republic of Moldova's fulfilment of the nine steps identified in the Commission opinion and to the Commission's assessment of the fulfilment of these steps as part of the 2023 enlargement package; expects the Commission to positively assess Moldova's the fulfilment of the steps; calls for the European Council, at its meeting of 14 and 15 December 2023, to adopt the decision to open accession negotiations with the Republic of Moldova, so that they can start before the end of

2023;

8. Welcomes the Moldovan authorities' further efforts to make progress on the reform agenda and their determination to fulfil the nine steps identified in the Commission opinion, as confirmed by the Enlargement Commissioner in his oral update to the Council; recalls that the Commission already considers three steps as fulfilled (2, 8 and 9) and that there has been significant progress on three other steps (1, 4, 7); encourages the Republic of Moldova to continue resolutely with its reform agenda on anti-corruption (such as its adoption of the law on whistleblowers, its further delineation of the competences of the Anti-Corruption Prosecution Office and the National Anticorruption Centre, and its soon to be completed adoption of the law on special investigative measures), the fight against organised crime (such as its transposition of the fifth EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive<sup>2</sup>, the fact that the Moneyval recommendations became effective as of 1 July 2023 and will followed by secondary legislation, and the development of civil confiscation is ongoing) and the public administration reform (such as its adoption of the public administration reform strategy for 2023-2026 and the salary increases in the central public administration);
9. Reiterates its call for an innovative, complementary and flexible interaction between the implementation of the Association Agreement and the accession negotiation process, allowing for the Republic of Moldova's gradual integration into the EU single market based on a priority action plan and relevant sectoral programmes and providing access to relevant EU funds, enabling Moldovan citizens to reap the benefits of accession during the process rather than only at its completion; welcomes the agreement associating the Republic of Moldova with the Connecting Europe Facility signed on 9 May 2023 and the agreement on its participation in the EU single market programme, signed on 8 September 2023;
10. Acknowledges the importance of the EU's comprehensive support package, which has mobilised over EUR 1.2 billion in loans and grants since October 2021 to strengthen Moldova's resilience; welcomes the EUR 145 million increase in the macro-financial assistance allocated to the Republic of Moldova, bringing to the total up to EUR 295 million; calls for a rapid disbursement of the additional allocation throughout 2023; calls on the Commission to swiftly disburse the remaining instalments of the ongoing macro-financial assistance for the Republic of Moldova;
11. Welcomes the support package for the Republic of Moldova, as presented by the President of the Commission, which aims to help mitigate the negative effects of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine by strengthening the country's resilience, security, economy and energy supplies and by supporting its accession path towards the EU;
12. Calls on the Commission to identify additional funds for the Republic of Moldova within the revision of the multiannual financial framework in 2023; calls for financial assistance to the Republic of Moldova to be given primarily in the form of direct budgetary support; stresses the importance of providing the Republic of Moldova with

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<sup>2</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/843 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive (EU) 2015/849 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, and amending Directives 2009/138/EC and 2013/36/EU (OJ L 156, 19.6.2018, p. 43).



access to EU pre-accession financial instruments as early as possible, including by providing support to adequately prepare the country to make the best use of pre-accession funds; calls on the Commission to present a proposal to revise the IPA III Regulation<sup>3</sup> accordingly as soon as feasible, including a proposal to sufficiently increase the overall IPA III budget; stresses the significance of ensuring synergies between EU programmes and additional resources provided by EU and international financial institutions, Member States, and other donors;

13. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to create a dedicated Ukraine facility to support the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of the country; notes that the planned allocation of up to EUR 50 billion for the facility between 2024 and 2027 for both grants and loans will replace the planned support for Ukraine under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation instrument (NDICI) - Global Europe; calls for all bilateral support for Ukraine provided for in the NDICI - Global Europe to be redirected to the Republic of Moldova, as an EU candidate country neighbouring Ukraine that has also suffered the most from the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine;
14. Recalls the rapid pace of transformative economic reforms that the Republic of Moldova has embarked on, including spearheading a massive deregulation process for its economy, cutting red tape and limiting bureaucracy, while accelerating the pace of digital transformation, in order to improve Moldova's business climate and make it easier to do business in Moldova; commends Moldova's efforts to bolster its small and medium-sized enterprise sector through rapid and straightforward access to financing, support programmes for entrepreneurs and pro-investment policies to improve business confidence, reduce the informal economy, create jobs, strengthen growth and boost trade and investment;
15. Recalls that trade synergies between the Republic of Moldova and the EU are significant, constituting nearly half of Moldova's trade last year, with more than 58 % of its exports going to EU countries;
16. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to further strengthen cooperation with the Republic of Moldova to enhance the country's resilience to hybrid threats in order to counter disinformation; welcomes the establishment of the EU Partnership Mission in Moldova under the common security and defence policy; calls on the Commission and the Moldovan authorities to strengthen strategic communications with the Moldovan population, including in the Transnistria region of the Republic of Moldova; calls on the Commission and all relevant EU agencies, once future EU accession negotiations start, to prepare for a negative environment and disinformation attacks promoted by a wide variety of Russian disinformation and hybrid-war tools, which are being constantly used in the Republic of Moldova and in the region;
17. Welcomes the decision of the Council to establish a new sanctions regime, in the light of actions destabilising the Republic of Moldova, targeting those supporting or implementing actions undermining or threatening its sovereignty, independence or

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III) (OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p. 1).

constitutional order, which allows such fugitives as Vladimir Plahotniuc and Ilan Șor to be targeted and their known assets in the EU to be frozen; welcomes the subsequent Council decision to impose restrictive measures on Ilan Șor under this new restrictive measures regime; calls on the respective hosting states and territories, furthermore, to extradite Ilan Șor and Vladimir Plahotniuc to stand trial in the Republic of Moldova; calls on the Commission and the Council to strengthen the policy targeting legal entities and individuals who attempt to obstruct or undermine the democratic political process of the Republic of Moldova;

18. Welcomes the renewal and expansion of temporary liberalisation measures to support the Republic of Moldova's economy by granting annual duty-free tariff-rate quotas to overcome the loss of its export markets in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine; calls for the EU to take swift and significant steps towards the permanent liberalisation of its tariff-rate quotas in order to ensure predictability and increase the country's medium-to-long-term attractiveness for investors, as requested by the Moldovan Government; notes that, as agriculture is a key economic sector for the Republic of Moldova, the aforementioned measures should also be accompanied by support for the sustainability of Moldova's agricultural production;
19. Welcomes the joint declaration of 31 May 2023 by EU and Moldovan telecom operators announcing the voluntarily lowering of roaming tariffs from 1 January 2024; welcomes the Commission proposal to incorporate roaming into the EU-Moldova Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and therefore calls for the Association Agreement to be swiftly amended to allow 'roam like at home' to start for Moldovan citizens as soon as possible;
20. Calls for the EU and its institutions to continue to support the Republic of Moldova's efforts to modernise its payments system in order to fulfil the conditions for integration into the Single Euro Payments Area;
21. Calls on the Commission to accelerate Moldova's EU integration by incorporating the country into EU instruments, agencies and programmes, such as the digital Europe programme, the European Environment Agency, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications, the EU Joint Procurement of medical countermeasures mechanism, DiscoverEU, the employment and social innovation programme, the citizens, equality, rights and values programme, the Erasmus+ programme and the justice programme;
22. Condemns Russia's continued energy blackmail and expresses its support for the Republic of Moldova's efforts to increase its energy security by diversifying supply sources, reducing consumption and purchasing energy on the European market and developing interconnectivity infrastructure, as well as for its actions to protect its citizens through a compensation plan for the most vulnerable groups via the Energy Vulnerability Fund; calls for the EU and its Member States to continue to support the Republic of Moldova in achieving energy independence, including by increasing its generating capacity, connectivity and diversification, and attracting investment in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, while ensuring environmental sustainability and striving towards carbon neutrality, in line with Moldova's strategic priorities;



23. Expresses hope that the Republic of Moldova's EU candidate status and future EU accession talks will help increase the number of students from EU Member States going to Moldova and Moldovan students enrolling at European and worldwide universities and later returning home in order to achieve the 'brain gain' needed to strengthen the local economy, as well as to strengthen academic exchange; calls on the Commission to allow Moldovan educational entities, academic staff and students, as well as youth in general, to participate in EU-supported and -financed academic, cultural and educational initiatives;
24. Welcomes all initiatives by civil society in the Republic of Moldova and the international community to support judicial integrity and reform in the country, in particular those efforts that make the general public aware of the positive impact that an independent, competent and efficient judiciary has on the everyday lives of citizens;
25. Encourages the organisation of bilateral parliamentary meetings between the parliaments of the Member States and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, as well as between the Commission and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, and recommends considering ways to bring forward the moment at which observers from the Republic of Moldova could take up their seats in Parliament, such as by linking it to the closing of negotiations on specific clusters; expresses its willingness to contribute to supporting and strengthening parliamentary democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including through the Jean Monnet Dialogue, when appropriate in its domestic context; calls in this regards for consideration to be given to strengthening the everyday cooperation between the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and the European Parliament by establishing the permanent presence of staff in each other's parliaments, which could entail appointing a permanent European Parliament representative to the Moldovan Parliament and inviting the Moldovan Parliament to appoint a permanent representative in Brussels; believes that such a decision would be a proactive sign of that the EU and Moldova are making the best use of the current opportunities between them and will strengthen information exchanges, the implementation of joint projects and future EU accession talks;
26. Recalls that consolidating the Republic of Moldova's administrative capacity is a key requirement set out in the Commission opinion of 17 June 2022; calls on the Commission, in the light of the above and given the Republic of Moldova's challenges and status as an EU candidate country, to further increase its staff capacity dealing with and supporting the accession process for the Republic of Moldova, both in Brussels and in Chişinău, and to establish a dedicated unit for the Republic of Moldova within its Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR);
27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations, the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation.