



Plenary sitting

B9-0420/2023

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))

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on behalf of the ECR 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 and on Eastern Partnership countries,
 - 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 part¹, which includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and which fully entered into force on 1 July 2016,
 - having regard to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union,
 - having regard to the Republic of Moldova's application for EU membership, submitted on 3 March 2022,
 - having regard to the Versailles Declaration of 10 and 11 March 2022,
 - having regard to the statement of 29 April 2022 by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, on the recent security incidents in the Transnistrian region,
 - 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),
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Republic of Moldova applied for accession to the EU on 3 March 2022, which demonstrates the determination of the authorities and citizens of Moldova to pursue the country's European integration; whereas on 23 June 2022, EU leaders granted EU candidate status to Moldova;
- B. whereas the Republic of Moldova has been severely affected by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, owing mainly to the arrival of more than 942 000 refugees from Ukraine since 24 February 2022, of whom around 118 000 have remained in the country; whereas Moldova has also been subject to economic pressure from Russia, in particular on energy;
- C. whereas on 17 June 2022, the Commission published its opinion detailing nine conditions for Moldova's accession to the EU; whereas the Moldovan authorities have stepped up their reforms in order to implement these nine conditions; whereas there has been a government reshuffle and the new government has been pursuing a pro-EU agenda, with a new focus on national security and accelerating the implementation of

¹ OJ L 260, 30.8.2014, p. 4.

the reforms that will allow Moldova to join the EU;

- D. whereas the Russian Federation has been using provocation and conducting hybrid operations, including disinformation and manipulation campaigns, with the objective of undermining the stability and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova; whereas there have been serious concerns about potential false flag operations in Moldova since the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine; whereas Ukrainian intelligence intercepted secret service plans to destroy the democratic system in Moldova and establish control over the state; whereas on 13 September 2023, the Moldovan authorities expelled Vitaly Denisov, the director of Russia's Sputnik state news agency in Moldova, on the grounds that he poses a threat to national security; whereas in August, Moldova expelled 45 Russian diplomats and embassy staff, citing fears of Moscow's efforts to 'destabilise' the country after a media investigation found an 'excessive' number of aerals on the roof of the embassy buildings;
- E. whereas Russian missiles targeting Ukraine have repeatedly flown over Moldova's territory and Russian missile debris has fallen on Moldovan territory; whereas the Moldovan Government has requested assistance for its air defence systems from its western partners; whereas the EU has purchased ground-based mobile long-range surveillance radar equipment in order to help Moldova monitor its airspace;
- F. whereas the de facto occupied region of Transnistria is receiving direct support from the Russian Federation, with at least 1 500 Russian troops present on the ground, supplemented by an additional 5 000 soldiers from the so-called armed forces of Transnistria, and with around 22 000 tonnes of Soviet-era ammunition and military equipment stored in the Cobasna depot;
- G. whereas on 24 April 2023, the European Union launched a common and security and defence policy civilian mission in Moldova (the EU Partnership Mission in the Republic of Moldova – EUPM Moldova); whereas the mission's objective is to enhance the resilience of the country's security sector to crises and hybrid threats, to strengthen its cybersecurity and boost its ability to counter foreign information manipulation and interference;
- H. whereas the EU has mobilised over EUR 1 billion in loans and grants for Moldova since October 2021; whereas the most recent European Council decision of May 2023 nearly doubled macro-financial assistance to Moldova from EUR 145 million to EUR 295 million;
- I. whereas Russia used its gas exports as a tool to pressure Moldova and steer it away from pro-European policy reforms by artificially creating a gas supply crisis in 2021 and 2022; whereas Moldova has taken steps to cut its energy supplies from Russia, with President Sandu announcing in September 2023 that Moldova is no longer dependent on Russia for gas and electricity;
- J. whereas in December 2022, the Moldovan Parliament adopted a new electoral code implementing the recommendations by international organisations; whereas the first elections under the new rules will take place in November 2023 and whereas the European Parliament will send an election observation delegation to Moldova; whereas on 26 September 2023 during a comprehensive economic partnership agreement forum,

President Sandu expressed concern about Russia interfering with the upcoming elections;

- K. whereas Moldova cooperates with NATO in a number of areas, including contributing to the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo and cooperating with NATO support for Moldova's defence reform and modernisation efforts under the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB), the Defence Training Enhancement Programme (DEEP) and the Building Integrity Programme;
 - L. whereas in June 2023 the Moldovan Constitutional Court banned the pro-Russian Shor Party;
 - M. whereas on 1 June 2023, Moldova hosted the second meeting of the European Political Community in Bulboaca, just a few kilometres from the Ukrainian border, which focused mainly on peace and security – including unity in support of Ukraine – as well as on energy and interconnectivity;
 - N. whereas on 29 September 2023 the EU and Moldova signed the Agreement for Moldova to become a Participating State in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism;
1. Stands in solidarity with the people of the Republic of Moldova 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 institutions and society; calls on the Russian authorities to respect the Republic of Moldova's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to cease its provocations and attempts to destabilise the country and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from the Transnistria region;
 2. Welcomes the leadership and political courage of President Sandu, as well as the determination and sense of responsibility with which the Moldovan authorities have managed to expose and counter Russian-backed attempts to destabilise the government; strongly supports Moldova's path towards EU membership and acknowledges that the country's place is in the EU and that it has long been part of western culture and civilisation;
 3. Reaffirms its full commitment to the Republic of Moldova's membership of the EU; welcomes the Moldovan authorities' considerable efforts to make progress on the reform agenda and their determination to take the nine steps identified in the Commission's opinion on Moldovan EU accession of 17 June 2022 in order to progress towards EU membership, despite Russian pressure and the crises triggered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine;
 4. Welcomes the steps already taken by the Moldovan Government to strengthen capacity for the implementation of EU integration priorities and calls on the Commission to provide more robust support in this area; welcomes in this regard the Moldovan authorities' considerable efforts to advance the reform agenda and their determination to take the nine steps identified in the Commission opinion, despite Russia's pressure and the crises triggered by Russia's war of aggression; calls on the Commission to set clear, measurable and consistent criteria and benchmarks for the nine steps identified for the Republic of Moldova to advance towards EU membership;

5. Underlines the fact that, similarly to Ukraine, the concrete prospect of joining the EU is an essential beacon of hope that will maintain Moldovan morale during this period of extreme insecurity and material hardship; expects a positive recommendation to be included in the Commission's enlargement package;
6. Calls for the EU and its Member States to closely monitor the situation in the Republic of Moldova and to take action to counter the Russian Federation's use of hybrid means of warfare;
7. Welcomes Moldova's condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; welcomes the Moldovan Government's pledge to adopt 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;
8. Commends the great solidarity shown by the citizens of the Republic of Moldova towards the refugees from Ukraine who are fleeing Russia's war of aggression; recalls that managing the situation of the around 118 000 refugees from Ukraine who have found shelter in the country, as well as many more who have transited through the Republic of Moldova, constitutes a heavy financial burden for the Moldovan State; calls for the EU to continue to provide financial support in the form of further support packages; welcomes, in this regard, the decision by the European Council to increase macro-financial assistance to Moldova to EUR 295 million;
9. Stresses the important role played by the Republic of Moldova so far in the safety and stability of the EU's eastern border in the context of the humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine;
10. Welcomes the cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and the EU on combating hybrid threats and calls on the Commission to ensure that all necessary assistance is provided to the Republic of Moldova to strengthen its institutional mechanisms and ability to respond to hybrid risks; welcomes Moldova's full accession to the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism;
11. Urges the Commission, the European External Action Service and the Member States to assist Moldova with its cybersecurity and strategic communications so that it can improve its resilience to possible Russian attacks, to support the work of journalists and civil society organisations seeking to counter disinformation and to further step up cooperation with the Republic of Moldova to enhance the country's resilience to hybrid threats, including through the joint development of a strategy to safeguard the integrity and security environment of the 2023 local elections, the 2024 presidential elections and the 2025 parliamentary elections;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue supporting the Republic of Moldova in ensuring its energy independence, connectivity, diversification and efficiency, as well as in accelerating the development of renewable energy sources; calls on the Moldovan authorities to maintain the country's commitments as a member of the Energy Community to implementing the EU's Third Energy Package, in particular the unbundling of gas and electricity transmission and distribution; welcomes the fact that Moldovan authorities are using the current crisis to end their country's economic and energy dependence on Russia;

13. Calls for the EU to continue to support the reconstruction and modernisation of the railway infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the port of Giurgiulești, as part of the solution to regional and global food security problems and as a way of bolstering the economies of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine;
14. Calls for the EU and its Member States to support the Republic of Moldova's integration by incorporating the country into EU programmes, instruments and agencies, such as the EU single market programme, the digital Europe programme, the European Environment Agency, the Connecting Europe Facility and the European Defence Agency;
15. Stresses the importance of providing Moldova with access to EU pre-accession financial instruments as early as possible; calls on the Commission to present a proposal to revise the IPA III Regulation² accordingly as soon as feasible, including a proposal to sufficiently increase the overall IPA III budget;
16. Commends the Republic of Moldova's commitment to step up its efforts to comply with the 'de-oligarchisation' requirement set out in the Commission opinion; welcomes the banning of the Șor Party by the Moldovan Constitutional Court and Moldova's adoption of EU sanctions personally targeted against the fugitive oligarchs Ilan Șor and Vladimir Plahotniuc as well as against their businesses and political organisations; calls on the respective hosting states and territories to extradite Ilan Șor and Vladimir Plahotniuc to stand trial in the Republic of Moldova;
17. Calls for the EU institutions and the Member States to ensure the implementation of short- and long-term solutions to reduce and subsequently abolish roaming charges between Moldova and the EU in order to extend the 'roam like at home' scheme to the Republic of Moldova;
18. Notes that the Orthodox Metropolis of Bessarabia, which was vindictively abolished by the Soviet authorities, was officially recognised in 2002 following a decision of the European Court of Human Rights; recognises the Orthodox Metropolis of Bessarabia as a victim of Soviet oppression;
19. 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 Government and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the UN and the Council of Europe.

² 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.