

EU-MOLDOVA PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

Sixth Meeting

5 April 2018

Chisinau

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. Eugen Carpov, on behalf of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, (hereinafter 'Moldova'), the sixth meeting of the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee (PAC) was held in Chisinau on 5 April 2018.

The Parliamentary Association Committee, having considered the state of play of EU-Moldova relations and of implementation of the Association Agreement, agreed upon the following final statement and recommendations.

The Parliamentary Association Committee:

On EU-Moldova relations and the implementation of the AA/DCFTA

1. Welcomes the Council conclusions on the Republic of Moldova adopted on 26 February 2018; encourages Moldovan institutions to work cooperatively and focus on tangible reforms which aim to bring about tangible improvements in Moldovan citizens' life, including increased prosperity and rule of law; stresses the need **to continue** to focus on the implementation of the AA/DCFTA in all areas in order to realise the full potential of the agreement, inter alia through the 13 key priorities set out in the 2017-2019 Association Agenda adopted in August 2017; welcomes the recent creation of the post of Vice Prime-Minister in charge of European Integration and expresses expectations as to a positive impact on the coordination of the European agenda;
2. Expresses satisfaction at the continuously increasing trade exchanges between the EU and Moldova, as a result of the DCFTA implementation; encourages further progress to be made in areas such as the customs code, the protection of intellectual property rights including geographical indications, and improvement of sanitary and phytosanitary standards;
3. Commends the role played by Moldova's civil society in fostering participation in the political debate and calls on Moldovan authorities to protect and strengthen the activism of Moldovan civil society by providing a sound legal framework, avoiding unnecessary and intrusive regulations or investigations that hamper the work of some organisations; reaffirms that Moldova's civil society has a key role to play in monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement and of

the reform agenda; encourages the government and the parliament **to continue cooperation** with the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform, which was set up within the framework of the Association Agreement for this purpose; **welcomes the adoption of the Strategy on Development of the Civil Society, adopted on 23rd of March by the Moldovan Parliament**; reiterates that the engagement with civil society should be systematic and continuous and invites to use best practice of other Eastern Partnership countries in this area;

4. Commends the positive contribution made by the Republic of Moldova to the Eastern partnership summit of 24 November 2017; takes the view that additional opportunities to deepen the relations between the EU and those partners that have made substantial progress in implementing AA/DCFTA-related reforms should be worked out, in order to provide sustained momentum in the relation, in line with the ‘EaP+’ model advocated by the European Parliament; welcomes in this respect the establishment of the Euronest working group on Association Agreements, the Como communiqué by the parliaments of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the co-organised conference on “Eastern Partnership and current security challenges”, held in Chisinau on 2 March 2018;
5. Reiterates that pursuant to Article 49 TEU, the Republic of Moldova – like any other European state – 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 the respect for the rule of law; underlines that the European perspective of Moldova must be rooted first and foremost in an adherence to the values which underpin the EU;
6. Highlights that Moldova’s deepening relation with the EU does not preclude it from maintaining and pursuing closer political and economic relations with third countries in so far as they respect the mutually agreed values of democracy, the rule of law, good governance and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; considers that Moldova’s opening to new markets will render its economy more competitive, will increase its attractiveness for investments and will lead to higher purchasing power for its citizens;
7. Welcomes the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group's decision to maintain Moldova as a priority country for cooperation in 2018 as a sign of the strategic importance of the Parliament of Moldova;

On the upcoming elections and the reform process in Moldova

8. Calls on all stakeholders to ensure that the upcoming parliamentary elections follow international obligations and standards for democratic elections and take into consideration the recommendations of the previous international election observation missions; insists in particular on the importance of the development of a truly multi-party system; regrets that the new electoral law did not address some key recommendations of the joint opinion of the Venice Commission/OSCE/ODIHR of 19 June 2017, **while respecting the principle**

of the sovereign right of the state to choose the electoral system; takes note of the new opinion and recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on the electoral system in the Republic of Moldova of 16 March 2018; welcomes the opinion of the Venice Commission/OSCE/ODIHR of 11 December 2017 on the funding of political parties and encourages the Moldovan authorities to follow the suggestions contained therein;

9. Welcomes the signature of the Macro-Financial Assistance's Memorandum of understanding, Loan Facility Agreement and Grant Agreement on 24 November 2017 and their ratification by the Moldova Parliament on 15 December 2017; recalls the Joint Statement by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission (Annex II) on the decision to provide macro-financial assistance which made the respect for effective democratic mechanisms, including a multi-party parliamentary system and the rule of law and the respect for human rights, preconditions for granting macro-financial assistance; calls on the Moldovan authorities to take the necessary steps in this respect in order to **ensure** the disbursement of this assistance;
10. Underlines the importance of living up to the high expectations of the citizens of Moldova and the EU with respect to the eradication of corruption and reiterates that de-politicised state institutions and eradication of corruption at all levels are required for the reform process to have credibility in the eyes of the public; takes notes of the Commission's First Report under the Visa Suspension Mechanism from December 2017, which finds that implementation of fight against corruption (in particular high-level corruption) and money laundering "is seriously lagging behind" and points at attempts to undermine the anti-corruption framework, at limitations in the scope of action of the asset recovery office and at delays in the implementation of the Law on National Integrity Authorities as well as on the alignment of anti-money laundering legislation with the 4th EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive; calls on all relevant stakeholders to undertake the necessary steps before the parliamentary elections in order to address these concerns;
11. Underlines too that the adoption of a Code of Conduct for MPs by the Moldovan Parliament would represent an important sign from all political parties that they recognise the need to tackle corruption in order to restore public trust and confidence in the parliament;
12. Furthermore stresses the importance of an impartial and well-functioning judiciary system; remind of the fact that the EU has withdrawn its budget support due to the lack of progress in the judicial reform; encourages the authorities to ensure that the next justice strategy 2018-2020 draws the lessons from the previous strategy, addresses the existing shortcomings and is designed in a transparent way, under involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including from the civil society; underlines in particular the need to enhance transparency and impartiality of the selection of judges and prosecutors;

13. Reminds of the high expectations of citizens regarding the judicial proceedings related to the banking fraud and of the need to bring all those responsible to justice; expresses therefore disappointment at the lack of progress in the prosecution of cases following the publication of the results of the Kroll investigation; stresses that all trials should be held in line with international standards and should be transparent;
14. ***Welcomes the reform of the Central Public Administration and*** reminds of the importance of an accountable, transparent and merit-based civil service;
15. Recalls the importance of ensuring media pluralism - including of TV channels, protecting independent media and freedom of expression, and reforming the national broadcaster; in this respect, welcomes the progress made towards the adoption of a new audiovisual code which would enhance transparency and competition in this sector and transpose the 2010 EU Media Services Directive;
16. Calls for continued efforts in the strengthening of independent banking supervision, improvement of transparency in ownership and management, and stabilisation of the banking sector, so as to increase confidence in the Moldovan financial sector and avoid the repetition of the Moldovan 2014 bank scandal and money-laundering cases;
17. Calls on the Moldovan government to reform the energy sector to increase transparency in costs and contracts in the energy sector, to improve energy independence and efficiency particularly by strengthening the independence of the energy regulator, increasing energy interconnections with the EU and through a diversification of energy sources, including renewable energy and a reduction of its dependence on fossil fuels;