**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on**

**Taking stock of Moldova's path to the EU**

1. **Resolution tabled pursuant to Rule 132 of the European Parliament's Rules of procedure**
2. **Reference numbers:** 2023/2838 (RSP) / B9-0408/2023 / P9\_TA(2023)0357
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 5 October 2023
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee onForeign Affairs (AFET)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution of the European Parliament reaffirms that the future of the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter ‘Moldova’) is in the European Union and reiterates its call for the start of EU accession talks with Moldova by the end of 2023. The content of the resolution is in line with the previous European Parliament resolution on Moldova “Challenges facing the Republic of Moldova” adopted on 19 April 2023.

The resolution calls for the EU and its Member States to increase financial and technical assistance, including by disbursing the next instalment of macro-financial assistance (MFA) and identifying additional funds for Moldova during the revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF). In view of the creation of a dedicated Ukraine facility, the European Parliament calls for all bilateral support for Ukraine provided for in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument–Global Europe (NDICI-GE) to be redirected to Moldova. In addition, the resolution calls on the Commission to work towards the country’s inclusion in the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) III Regulation. Moreover, the resolution stresses the need to incorporate Moldova in the various EU programmes.

The resolution highlights the need for the EU and its Member States to continue providing political, economic, and humanitarian support, including through the Moldova Support Platform. The European Parliament calls to support Moldova through, among others, the permanent liberalisation of the tariff-rate quotas, increasing the assistance to Moldovan farmers, the implementation of sanctions and additional targeted sanctions listings, strengthening the EU Partnership Mission in Moldova (EUPM Moldova), improving strategic communication and media literacy, consolidating the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova, ensuring Moldova’s energy independence and increasing the support for the rehabilitation and upgrading Moldova’s transport infrastructure.

The resolution also calls on the Commission to increase its staff capacity supporting Moldova and to establish a dedicated unit for Moldova inside the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

1. **Response to the requests and overview of the action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

The European Commission welcomes the support of the European Parliament to Moldova and its EU path.

Regarding **Moldova’s European integration (paragraph 2)**, the Commission in its June 2022 Opinion on Moldova’s membership application set out nine steps. Since June 2022, the Commission has been supporting Moldova’s efforts to implement the nine steps. On 22 June 2023, the Commission provided an oral update to the Council about the state of implementation of these steps.

On 8 November 2023, the Commission provided its formal assessment on Moldova’s implementation of the nine steps as part of the annual Enlargement Package in the autumn. In light of the results achieved by Moldova, and of the ongoing reform efforts, the Commission recommended that the Council opens accession negotiations for Moldova.

On 14 December 2023, the European Council decided to open accessions negotiations with Moldova and invited the Council to adopt the negotiating framework once the relevant steps set out in the Commission recommendations of 8 November 2023 are taken.

Regarding the **financial and technical assistance to Moldova (paragraphs 4, 5, and 6), including through the Moldova Support Platform (paragraph 13)**, the EU has already mobilised EUR 1.2 billion to help Moldova face multiple crises since the autumn of 2021, including through macro-financial assistance, budget support, humanitarian assistance, grants as part of the annual country allocations, regional programmes, the European Peace Facility (EPF), the EUPM and leveraging investments under the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP).

The ongoing macro-financial assistance programme to Moldova is worth a total of up to EUR 295 million – of which Moldova has already received EUR 172.5 million. The payments under MFA are subject to Moldova fulfilling relevant policy commitments agreed with the EU. Among other objectives, Moldova has made progress in improving energy security.

As part of the EIP, the EU has mobilised EUR 900 million in grants, loans and blending operations for Moldova, achieved through cooperation with banks and development partners from EU Member States.

 Subject to budget availabilities, the Commission will seek to reinforce financial support for the country in the future.

The Moldova Support Platform has played a significant role in assisting Moldova since its first meeting on 5 April 2022 by mobilising and coordinating the donors’ financial, political and technical support. Through the joint support of donors, Moldova has received EUR 200 million in grants and EUR 500 million in loans.

On **Moldova’s participation in EU programmes (paragraph 12)**, considering the grave consequences of the war against Ukraine, Moldova's obligation to contribute financially to participating in EU programmes will be suspended. The Commission services are currently working on the implementation of this suspension.

The Commission and the European External Action Service have put together a package of support for Moldova, as announced by Commission President von der Leyen on 31 May 2023 in Chișinău, following a request from the European Council. Supporting Moldova’s administrative capacity is among the five priorities of the package and include increasing the participation of Moldova in EU programmes.

Regarding the **support to farmers (paragraph 14)**, the Commission currently supports Moldova’s agriculture sector with bilateral assistance and projects. These actions focus, among others, on sustainable agri-food systems and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the agriculture sector, as part of the annual action plans in favour of Moldova for 2022 and 2021. An additional support to the sector is planned as part of the annual action plan in favour of Moldova for 2023.

Regarding **sanctions (paragraph 17)**, the Council decided on 30 May 2023 to impose restrictive measures against five individuals under the sanction’s framework adopted on 28 April 2023 targeting persons responsible for actions aimed at destabilising, undermining or threatening the sovereignty and independence of Moldova.

On **increasing Moldova’s capacities to respond to hybrid threats (paragraphs 20 and 24)**, the Support Package for Moldova aims to enhance Moldova’s security by expanding cooperation and assisting Moldovan institutions through the EUPM, the EU-Moldova Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management, the EU Border Assistance Mission, as well as with European agencies notably the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), and strengthening Moldova’s defence sector through the EPF. On the latter, the EU is working on a new envelope of EUR 50 million for 2024.

On **improving strategic communication** about the EU in Moldova **(paragraph 22)**, the ongoing EU Regional Communication Programme (‘EU NEIGHBOURS EAST’ 2020-2024) enhances strategic communication actions, improves public understanding of the EU and its policies and builds societal resilience to disinformation in Moldova. Apart from managing the EU NEIGHBOURS EAST website[[1]](#footnote-1), the programme’s activities include thematic communication campaigns, public diplomacy actions, opinion polling and outreach in partnership with youth activists, media partners, national authorities, civil society organisations, academia and different professional networks and associations. It also manages the network of Young European Ambassadors.

The EU Delegation to Moldova also implements a project focusing on strategic communication and support to mass-media, which aims at increasing citizens’ access to communication products on the EU assistance and their access to diversified media content. In addition, the EU is providing support to the Moldovan Centre for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation both through the EUPM and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, which has mobilised a senior expert to support the organisation. On **supporting media literacy and the independence of the media (paragraph 22)**, Moldova participates in various EU funded projects such as the ‘EU Support for Local Media Outlets in Moldova’ project whose key objectives include strengthening the independence of local media, as well as the ‘Resilient Civil Society and Media respond to the Ukraine War’ and ‘EU4 Independent Media programme’ regional programmes which aim to build the resilience of civil society and independent media and empower citizens. Moldova also benefitted from the ‘Supporting Independent Media and Information Resilience (SIMIR) in Moldova’ project which contributed to improve resilience to disinformation by strengthening independent media and promoting local voices.

On **ensuring Moldova’s energy independence (paragraph 25)**, the EU supports Moldova in improving its energy resilience and in ensuring stable electricity and gas supplies. With EU assistance, Moldova has made its first purchases of gas and electricity from the EU, and the country can participate in the joint gas purchasing mechanism. Reduction in energy demand is also prioritised to ensure Moldova’s energy security. Since December 2021, EUR 205 million in EU budget has been made available also to help vulnerable people pay their energy bills and a further EUR 35 million is expected to be disbursed by the Commission in early 2024.

On **the support to Moldova’s transport infrastructure** **(paragraph 25)**, three grant agreements were signed on 25 October 2023 under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for transport, worth almost EUR 45 million, to improve transport links between Moldova and Romania along the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). During the Global Gateway Forum on 25 October 2023, the Commission announced that it would provide an investment grant of EUR 12 million, supported by a loan of EUR 42 million from the European Investment Bank (EIB) to rehabilitate and modernise two key sections of railway lines in Moldova.

On **increasing the Commission’s staff capacity (paragraph 26)**, the Commission is in the process of strengthening the Unit responsible for Moldova in the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) as well as the EU Delegation to Moldova.

1. <https://euneighbourseast.eu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)