

Moldova: the European Union must grant the country EU candidate status

Against the backdrop of Russia's war against Ukraine, MEPs call on the EU to provide more strategic support to Moldova following its application for EU membership.

On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted its annual implementing report on the EU association agreement with Moldova, with 512 votes in favour, 43 against and 39 abstentions.

In addition to a worsening security landscape, the text recognises that the Russian war against Ukraine has disproportionately affected neighbouring Moldova. Its economy has been impacted by lost import and export opportunities and rapidly increasing energy prices. Moldova has also taken in the largest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita of any country, putting its public services under enormous strain.

Triggered by the Russian invasion, Moldova's official application on 3 March to join the European Union was welcomed by MEPs, as it 'confirms the country's European path'. They call on the EU institutions to grant EU candidate status to Moldova, along with Ukraine and Georgia, in line with [Article 49 TEU](#) and 'on the basis of merit'. In the meantime, the European Union and Moldova should continue work on integrating the country into the EU single market.

The European Commission, for its part, must assist Moldova in preparing a credible pre-accession strategy for EU membership. MEPs also point out the need for more strategic EU support to Moldova, for example by setting up a new Commission Support Group for the country, similar to the [existing one for Ukraine](#).

Push ahead with key reforms

The report further stresses that the EU membership applications of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia open a new chapter in their European integration, which should be characterised by reinforced efforts to implement the existing Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.

While welcoming the initial progress of the current government's ambitious reform agenda, MEPs strongly encourage the Moldovan authorities to work on irreversibly aligning the country with the EU. This includes advancing reforms in the field of justice and rule of law as well as fighting corruption and oligarchic structures.

The text also emphasises the need for the government to continue improving the livelihoods and living standards of Moldovan citizens, in order to prevent the ongoing 'brain drain', and restoring people's trust in state institutions.

Transnistria

Finally, MEPs express serious concern over the recent series of security incidents in the Russian-backed breakaway region of Transnistria and condemn them as dangerous acts of provocation undertaken in a highly volatile security situation. They reiterate their support for a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Transnistria conflict, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova.

Quote

"The European Union must urgently grant the status of candidate country to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. This is a message with three possible recipients. It is a message to the world that the European Union supports those with whom we share the same values in a concrete, tangible and committed manner. It is a message to Putin, and to all the dictators in the world, that we will remain united in the face of any aggression and will only grow stronger by such actions. Above all, it is also a message to the citizens of Moldova, to those who have chosen a European path, that Europe sees them, hears them and will not abandon them", said rapporteur [Dragoș Tudorache](#) (Renew Europe, Romania).

More information

A delegation of MEPs visited the country from 31 March to 2 April. They met with Moldova's political leadership, including President Maia Sandu, Speaker of the Parliament Igor Grosu, Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilița, and Defence Minister Anatolie Nosatîi. Read more about the visit [here](#).

Further information

[The adopted text will be available here \(19.05.2022\)](#)

[Watch a video recording of the plenary debate \(18.05.2022\)](#)

[Press release: "Moldova belongs in the European Union says President Maia Sandu" \(18.05.2022\)](#)

[Press release: "Grant Moldova EU candidate status, say MEPs" \(05.05.2022\)](#)

[Press release: "The EU must act and step up its support to Moldova following the Ukraine war" \(02.04.2022\)](#)

[Press release: "Parliament approves €150 million in assistance to Moldova" \(24.03.2022\)](#)

[Press release: "MEPs greenlight the deployment of Frontex in the Republic of Moldova" \(24.03.2022\)](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material \(EU-Moldova\)](#)

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