

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

EU-MOLDOVA PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the SIXTH MEETING

Wednesday, 11 June 2003

CHISINAU

CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
1. Adoption of draft agenda (PE 331.245).....	2
2. Adoption of the minutes of the fifth meeting of the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee held in Strasbourg on 25/26 September 2002 (PE 325.773).....	2
3. Implementation of the EU-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.....	2
Opening statements by:	
- Government of the Republic of Moldova	
- Presidency-in-Office of the Council of the European Union	
- European Commission	
4. Implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of 26 September 2002 (PE 322.114)	3
5. Future EU-Moldova relations within the framework of the "Wider Europe" debate.....	3
6. Current enlargement process and constitutional developments of the European Union.....	5
7. Political, social and economic developments in Moldova, including local elections of May 2003	4
8. EU aid to Moldova - budgetary control and combating fraud	4
9. Situation in Transnistrian region.....	4
10. Relations of Moldova with its neighbours, including its activity within the framework of the Stability Pact and border issues	5
11. Adoption of the recommendations	5
12. Any other business	5
13. Date and place of next meeting.....	5

Annex: Record of attendance

19 October 2004
EUR/TB/ES

The meeting opened at 15h00 with Mr Jan Marinus WIERSMA (European Parliament) and Mr Victor STEPANIUC (Moldovan Parliament) in the chair.

1. The agenda was adopted as tabled.
2. The minutes of the 5th PCC meeting of 25/26 September were adopted by unanimity.

3.

Mr Victor STEPANIUC, Co-Chairman of the EU-Moldova PCC, opened the 6th meeting by welcoming all the participants. He set out Moldova's position in its current international relations, and emphasised the particular importance Moldova attached on chairing the Council of Europe, on hosting the Black Sea Conference and on this 6th Meeting of the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee which were taking place at the same time. He explained the constitutional process as initiated by the Joint Constitutional Committee, which has been charged with negotiating a draft constitution, which should overcome the problem of Transnistria's secession.

Mr STEPANIUC also underlined Moldova's willingness to be an ever-closer political partner of the European Union in South East Europe.

Mr Vasile TARLEV, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova reiterated Moldova's objectives and current role in international relations. He informed the Cooperation Committee of the measures and actions his government had undertaken since the 5th meeting, in particular

- the fight against money laundering
- the state programme to combat crime and corruption
- the law on education and abstention of narcotics to stop the growing consumption of drugs
- the measures against illegal migration and against the trafficking of human beings, in particular children
- the measures in relation to Moldovan citizens working illegally abroad
- the adaptation of Moldovan legislation to EU and international standards
- the measures taken together with the EU services in order to coordinate all the efforts to modernise Moldova's legislation and administration.

He also referred to the securing of Moldova's eastern border and to the newly established joint customs points with Ukraine. He also referred to the special nature of the Transnistria situation and the border between this territory and Ukraine.

On the subject of Moldova's exports he underlined the importance of bilateral Free Trade Agreements, and also to the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment), which is allocated mostly in the agricultural sector in accordance with the structure of Moldova's economy, pointing out that Moldova has the lowest FDI in Europe.

Mr TARLEV stressed that the South East European Stability Pact was of major importance for Chisinau, and clearly demonstrated Moldova's destination as a European country that would be part of the European Community. The Prime Minister concluded by stressing Moldova's aim of becoming a full member of the European Union.

Mr Steffen SKOVMAND, Chargé d'affaires of the EC Delegation to Moldova in Kyiv, welcomed the initiatives the Moldovan government had undertaken since the 5th meeting. He underlined the importance and necessity of further measures, in particular in relation to the problem of money laundering and of drug trafficking. He called for even stronger efforts and market-oriented initiatives to attract FDI, and for the further development and strengthening of EU-Moldovan relations.

4.

Mrs SCHROEDTER outlined the recommendations stressing the overall importance of those measures that aimed to strengthen the fight against corruption and to integrate the black economy into the official national market economy. She referred to the problem of emigration of young citizens and reiterated the request for the opening of an EC Delegation in Moldova. She also expressed regret that the socio-economic situation had not stabilised since the last meeting, and that the inflow of FDI was suffering as a consequence.

The human rights situation had been raised in the 5th meeting as well as the independence of the media, but she pointed out that the observation report on the local elections had noted that the implementation of legislation in that regard was still unsatisfactory. There had been belated progress on the withdrawal of the Russian military from Transnistria. The border region of the Upper Prud had, in her view, given an example how cooperation might be organised in a border region in a neighbourly and efficient way.

Mr STEPANIUC commented on these points for the Moldovan delegation and highlighted the many improvements that had been achieved since the 5th meeting, pointing out that thanks to the current economic growth the government was able to overcome the acute debt crisis. He also referred to the situation and role of the media, notably in the course of the last election campaign.

5.

Mr Charles TANNOCK introduced the European Commission's communication on a "Wider Europe", which had the objective of setting out a new relationship with the EU's neighbours after the conclusion of the current enlargement process in 2004 and 2007. This communication referred to all future neighbours, in East Europe as well as in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and touched on all possible sectors, excluding only participation in EU institutions.

Mr TANNOCK underlined the importance of Article 49 of the Treaty of the European Union within the "Wider Europe" concept, particularly for the Republic of Moldova. He argued that TACIS and other donor programmes should be available to help all the participating countries to make the best use of the windows of opportunity.

Mr Andrei STRATAN, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, referred in his remarks to the Stability Pact, to the New Neighbourhood Policy of the EU and to Moldova's possible membership of a South East Europe Free Trade Association. He noted that the WTO, bilateral Free Trade Agreements and the EU-Moldova PCA had great importance for his country, and he saw the "Wider Europe" approach as a means of integrating Moldova further into the EU market.

Co-Chairman Jan Marinus WIERSMA referred to the Copenhagen Criteria as a condition prior to integration into the EU. Prime Minister TARLEV insisted that Moldova had clearly expressed its desire to join the EU and was already on its way to implement the Copenhagen criteria. He cited the example of the laws concerning the media and the adjustments accomplished in the sector, indicating that Moldova's relationship with the EU could be strengthened by means of developing more cooperation projects. A solution of the Transnistrian conflict would be essential for Moldova's integration into the EU, however the enormous potential of Moldova could only be achieved with the help of its friends such as the Union.

After an additional remark by Mr Andrei NEGUTA, Mr WIERSMA closed the exchange on this point.

9.

Mr Vadim MISIN, First Deputy Chairman of the Moldovan Parliament, introduced the subject of the Transnistrian conflict, commenting on its history and on the memoranda which had been negotiated within a multilateral context. He referred in particular to the OSCE memorandum as well as to the "Kyiv memorandum", to the constitutional approach for solving the problem by means of a Confederation, and to more practical necessities, such as the need for a single currency and other practical improvements.

Mr Charles TANNOCK underlined the urgency of solving the Transnistrian conflict in time before Romania's and Bulgaria's accession to the EU, in order to avoid a situation in which Transnistria became an open door for smuggling and trafficking into the EU. He also touched upon the issues of reinforced Russification, the human rights situation in the prisons and the withdrawal of the 14th Army of Russia in Transnistria.

After interventions by Co-Chair Mr WIERSMA, Mr FOLIAS and Mr BALFE about the role of the European Union and the European Parliament in finding a solution for the Transnistrian conflict, Mr MISIN drew the attention of the meeting to the constitutional process as a means of solving the conflict.

Mr Vasilie SOVA, Minister of Reintegration, elaborated further on the necessary guarantees for all parties participating in the negotiations, and explained the new customs rules on the Ukraine-Moldovan border.

Mr Dumitru BRAGHIS spoke on the detailed aspects of the conflict, namely the different administrations to be integrated, the different legislation's that were largely incompatible, and the necessary demilitarisation of the border. He raised the possibility of a referendum as a final step towards such a process of reintegration. Mr CUBREACOV and Mr STEPANIUC also spoke.

8.

Mr Herbert BÖSCH cited President VORONIN's request for EU support for an anti-corruption campaign and listed the ten major cases that had done harm to EU financial interests, such as cigarette smuggling, frauds with EU humanitarian aid, olive oil exports and fraudulent meat exports. He underlined that with the accession countries the EU had demanded zero tolerance of corruption, particularly in the senior governmental ranks. He also referred to an article in his local newspaper, reporting on young Austrian football fans having to bribe on five different occasions Moldovan officials in order to be able to cross the borders on their way to attend a recent football match in Tiraspol. Mr STEPANIUC, Mr COJUHARI, Mrs SCHROEDTER, Mr CUBREACOV and Mr NEGUTA also spoke.

7.

Mr CUBREACOV introduced the situation of democratic rights in the Republic of Moldova, and referred to the difficulties the opposition parties had encountered during the recent local election campaign. He informed the Committee about the successful law case the Bessarabian church had won at the Strasbourg Human Rights Court, and he stressed the situation of the ethnic non-Russian children who were obliged to attend Russian language schools. He also drew the attention of the meeting to the situation of the political prisoners in Tiraspol.

Mr STEPANIUC broadly rejected all allegations made by Mr CUBREACOV, pointing towards the positive reports the international observers had given on the local elections. He insisted on the good functioning of the public TV, which had been denationalised, and underlined the independence of the judiciary.

Mr Ion GUTU spoke on a particular petition on behalf of the "Social-Democrat Alliance" in this context, which he claimed to have been ignored by the government. He stressed the overall difficulty of access to the media for his party.

6./10.

Items 6 and 10 were covered under other headings.

11.

The recommendations were adopted on 12 June 2003. Mr TANNOCK wished to record his objection to the reference in paragraph 21 to the sending of EU peacekeeper to Transnistria.

12. There were no remarks.

13. The next meeting will take place in Brussels or Strasbourg in 2004. No provisional date has agreed because of the European Parliament elections.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

EU-MOLDOVA PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE

SIXTH MEETING

11 June 2003

CHISINAU

List of participants

Members:

Mr Jan Marinus WIERSMA, <i>Chairman</i>	PSE, Netherlands	<i>Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy; Petitions</i>
Ms Elisabeth SCHROEDTER, <i>1st Vice-Chair</i>	Verts/ALE, Germany	<i>Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy</i>
Mr Herbert BÖSCH	PSE, Austria	<i>Budgetary Control; Petitions</i>
Mr Christos FOLIAS	PPE-DE, Greece	<i>Agriculture and Rural Development</i>
Dr Charles TANNOCK	PPE-DE, United Kingdom	<i>Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy, Member</i>
Mr Richard A. BALFE, <i>Quaestor</i>	PPE-DE, United Kingdom	<i>Petitions</i>

Secretariat of the delegation:

Mr Timothy BODEN, Administrator responsible for the Delegation

Mr Stefan PFITZNER, Deputy Head of Division

Ms Elke SCHMUTTERER, Assistant/Secretary

Presidency-in-Office of the Council of the European Union:

H.E. Mr Panagiotis GOUMAS, Ambassador of Greece in Kyiv

European Commission:

Mr Steffen SKOVMAND, Chargé d'affaires of the Head of Delegation to Moldova in Kyiv

Interpreters (3):

Romanian booth:

Ms Mariana STOICAN

Mr Alcor CRISAN

English booth:

Ms Christine MC GOWAN-SMYTH

Abbreviations :

PPE-DE	European People's Party/European Democrats	UEN	Union for a Europe of Nations
PSE	Party of European Socialists	NI	Non-attached
ELDR	Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party	EDD	Europe of Democracies and Diversities
Verts/ALE	Greens/European Free Alliance	TDI	Technical Group of Independent Members
GUE/NGL	European United Left/Nordic Green Left		

EU-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

MOLDOVAN DELEGATION

Co-Chairman:

1. STEPANIUC Victor *Chairman of the Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM)*

Deputy chairs:

2. ROȘCA Iurie *Chairman of the Parliamentary Faction of the Christian Democratic People's Party*
3. BRAGHIȘ Dumitru *Chairman of the Parliamentary Faction of the Social Democratic Alliance*

Members:

4. NEGUȚA Andrei *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
5. COJUHARI Boris *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
6. RUSU Mihai *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
7. MARTINIUC Spiridon *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
8. MANTOROV Oleg *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
9. FILIMON Ion *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
10. PISIMAC Ivan *Parliamentary Faction of the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova*
11. GUȚU Ion *Parliamentary Faction of the Social Democratic Alliance*
12. UNTU Ion *Parliamentary Faction of the Social Democratic Alliance*
13. PETRACHE Mihai *Independent MP*

19/05/2003