



## **Declaration of the 8th joint meeting of the Republic of Moldova-European Union Domestic Advisory Groups on Trade and Sustainable Development**

19 May 2025  
Chişinău – Brussels

Representatives of the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) from the EU and the Republic of Moldova, set up under Chapter 13 on Trade and Sustainable Development of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union, held their 8th joint meeting on 19 May 2025. The proceedings took place in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 13 on Trade and Sustainable Development of the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union.

*The EU and Moldovan Domestic Advisory Groups:*

1. Acknowledge the impressive progress Moldova has made on its European accession agenda, along with the strong support from the European Parliament and Commission.
2. Welcome the Moldova Growth Plan – the largest financial support package the EU has ever granted to Moldova, consisting of EUR 1.5 billion in concessional loans, EUR 285 million in non-repayable financial support (grants) and EUR 135 million set aside to provision the loans, planned for 2025-2027;
3. Stress the need to engage the social partners, civil society organisations, the expert community, academia and local public authorities in the development, monitoring and implementation of the reform agenda, as well as in the design and monitoring of specific indicators and intermediate indicators to measure progress; note that the important part is the involvement of organised civil society representatives in developing the Plan's scoreboard and independent monitoring of the implementation of the reform agenda;
4. Express our appreciation for the constructive and transparent collaboration with representatives of public institutions and experts from the European Commission throughout the bilateral screening process and emphasise the importance of active civil society participation in this process, including through the provision of expertise, monitoring, and the promotion of dialogue among stakeholders, as an essential element of the European integration path.

5. Call on the Parties to promote in-person meetings of the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-Committee, enabling civil society to organise corresponding in-person meetings alongside those of the Parties.

***On economic sustainability***

6. Welcome the adoption by the Government of Moldova of the Reform Agenda as part of the EUR 1.9 billion Growth Plan and emphasise the need to promote bolder policy measures to stimulate economic development by supporting investments in higher value-added economic activities, promoting domestic producers and strengthening the governance and efficiency of public investments;
7. call for the development of targeted (dedicated) programmes to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship, including access to concessional financing, training, and mentorship, particularly for young entrepreneurs and women. Urge the authorities to continue to simplify administrative procedures for business creation and operation. We encourage the use of EU funds from the Reform and Growth Facility to develop the entrepreneurial ecosystem, with a focus on innovation and integrating SMEs into European value chains, including alignment with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards;
8. stress the need to prioritise the transition to a new economic growth model based on higher productivity and value added, as the country is gradually exhausting its current competitiveness model based on inputs/resources (mostly cheap labour), leading to the deceleration of economic growth over recent years and the erosion of the country's potential;
9. underscore that Moldova should focus on channelling policies and resources into supporting the private sector, which generates added value, by processing local raw materials, streamlining production processes and implementing technological innovations;
10. stress the need to facilitate access to finance through credit acceleration instruments: capitalisation of the Credit Guarantee Fund and the compliant adjustment of the guarantee products; the FACEM and '373' programmes need to be further capitalised; the programmes for access to bank financing need to be expanded to include other types of expenses (e.g. the purchase of raw materials in sectors with a high GVA would help to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of businesses);
11. underscore the urgent need to develop the capital market in order to boost financial intermediation and stimulate investment, by supporting capital market instruments that would streamline the circulation of capital in the economy: private pension funds, investment funds, the promotion of debt instruments in the form of bonds and equity instruments in the form of shares;
12. emphasise the need to support domestic producers and promote the brand identity and quality of local products by: i) implementing an efficient management system in promoting agri-food

products; ii) improving the quality policy and capitalising on Moldovan agri-food products; while also iii) increasing the links between agricultural producers;

13. stress the need to increase investments in the quality infrastructure to facilitate local producers' access to foreign markets, including by modernising quality infrastructure laboratories and creating additional laboratories to properly apply EU quality and safety standards. There is also a need to invest in education and training in the field of quality infrastructure and in improving the capacity of local auditors, quality control staff and certification bodies to assess products in line with EU rules;
14. draw attention to the need to strengthen the internal market surveillance framework so that products placed on the market comply with EU quality and safety standards. In addition, the consumer protection framework should be significantly improved by implementing appropriate digital tools to facilitate the submission and management of consumer petitions, strengthening the institutional framework and fully aligning with the EU acquis. These measures would allow the removal from the market of imported products of questionable quality that compete unfairly with domestic producers;
15. emphasise the need to improve the governance framework related to funding infrastructure projects, by:
  - Depoliticising the Road Fund Council to ensure the promotion of decisions based on data and efficiency criteria and ensuring a permanent secretariat for the Road Fund Council.
  - Increasing the professionalism of the project implementation units in order to accelerate the upgrading of infrastructure, including transport.
  - Ensuring predictability in the financing of infrastructure projects by complying with the implementation programmes and sectoral strategies, as well as the medium-term planning framework, which will enable a single framework for planning private investments in the sector.
  - Attracting private capital by modernising the regulatory framework and ensuring transparency and professionalism in the initiation and implementation of PPPs and concession contracts.
16. urge the Moldovan authorities to prioritise the digital transformation of the economy, including through investments in high-speed internet infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, and by promoting digital skills among the workforce and entrepreneurs. Call for support for technology-based entrepreneurship and the adoption of EU standards for e-commerce and data protection (e.g. GDPR) to enhance Moldova's integration into the EU digital single market.

#### ***On the labour market***

17. Stress the need to adjust the minimum wage in line with the EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages<sup>1</sup>, as a measure to address the informal employment and income inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022L2041>

It is also necessary to transpose this Directive with regard to the 80% of workers covered by collective agreements;

18. call for the urgent amendment of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 218/2008 to establish sanctions for acts of discrimination and anti-union or anti-employer interference, including violations of rights guaranteed by legislation and the statutes of trade unions and employers' organisations;
19. strongly call for increased funding for government programmes aimed at reskilling and upskilling the unemployed, which would increase labour productivity and workers' ability to adapt to changing economic and technological conditions; encourage an exchange of best practices with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP);
20. call for the improvement of the legal framework in the field of social dialogue and partnership to facilitate and enhance the effectiveness of trade unions and employers' organisations and their participation in decision-making processes;
21. emphasise the need to expand public and private nursery services, with funding from sources other than local budgets, in order to facilitate the integration of a larger part of the working age population into the labour market and to enhance gender equality. It was recently announced that, through the European Commission's Growth Plan for Moldova, 5 000 nursery places are to be opened over the next few years. Also, it is necessary to ensure partial subsidising of parents' expenses for private nursery services where public ones are not available;
22. stress the need to further improve the legal framework in the field of wages for the public sector and to establish a unique reference value for all categories of employees in the public sector;
23. urge the authorities to support and promote social investment in the implementation of the Economic Growth Plan for the years 2025-2027;
24. call for the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate access to European pre-accession funds for the social partners – trade unions and employers' organisations – ensuring their institutional and operational capacity to effectively contribute to the development, implementation, and monitoring of policies related to the labour market, social dialogue, and the European integration process;
25. strongly call for the capacities of the National Employment Agency and the State Labour Inspectorate to be strengthened to ensure the effective implementation of the European acquis in the field of employment and workers' rights protection.

***On the environment***

26. emphasise the importance of further strengthening Moldova's environmental governance and climate action; call on the authorities to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the Ministry of the Environment and its agencies to improve policy implementation and law enforcement across all environmental domains;
27. stress the importance of precise and unambiguous forestry policy goals that are backed by the authorities with solid budgetary and international support, and call for more efficient and sustainable forest management, in line with the General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe<sup>2</sup>, including for non-state-owned forests and considering the input of environmental organisations and other non-state actors;
28. stress the importance of accelerating the reform of environment payments and taxes to create proper incentives for green economic development;
29. encourage promotion of the circular economy and efficient waste and water management in close cooperation with local authorities and citizens;
30. draw attention to the importance of implementing the online and automated air quality monitoring system at national level, with financial support, including access to data for all actors.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/MC\\_helsinki\\_resolutionH1.pdf](https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/MC_helsinki_resolutionH1.pdf)