



Eighth meeting, Chisinau (held online), 28 October 2021

JOINT DECLARATION

The EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform¹ (CSP) is one of the bodies set up under the Association Agreement between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter the "Association Agreement"). It enables civil society organisations from both sides to monitor the implementation process, to draft recommendations for the relevant authorities on the two sides, and to endorse declarations that outline progress achieved and address issues of concern.

The eighth CSP meeting was held on 28 October 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held online. CSP members discussed the state of play regarding implementation of the Association Agreement and focused on social dialogue in the Republic of Moldova and on the country's integration into the European Common Transport Area.

With regard to implementation of the Association Agreement, the CSP members:

1. welcome the results of the snap parliamentary elections held in July 2021, which gave Moldova an important opportunity to further strengthen its political and economic integration with the EU and to speed up implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement and of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement;
2. take note of the Association Implementation Report on the Republic of Moldova published in October 2021 and agree that pro-reform forces need to use the favourable momentum to pursue the ambitious agenda to combat corruption and reduce the role of oligarchs in policy-making, and to continue with judicial and administrative reform and with the fight against poverty;
3. are delighted to note that, following approval by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Moldova has become the 35th State to have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention);
4. welcome the Economic Recovery Plan for the Republic of Moldova announced in June 2021 and underline the importance of fully involving the social partners and civil society in its implementation;
5. take note of the Batumi Summit Declaration issued by the Heads of State of Association Trio - Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine - on 19 July 2021 and believe that the Trio provides a valuable platform for exchanging best practices on reform agenda, boosting regional cooperation and moving towards closer integration with the European Union;

¹ The EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform's documents are available at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/sections-other-bodies/other/eu-moldova-civil-society-platform/events>.

6. recommend unifying methodologies, using compatible greenhouse gas forecasting tools and developing better coordination between public authorities responsible for energy and climate policies, to ensure policy coherence and delivery on international commitments;
7. are deeply concerned by the current energy crisis in Moldova following a supply shortage of natural gas and the absence of a new energy deal with Russian gas suppliers and call on the EU to seek ways to provide the necessary support;
8. reiterate the importance of independent, diversified and transparent media; in this regard, welcome the government's plans to improve the legal framework in relation to access to information and underline the need to involve civil society and media experts in designing the new legislation;
9. call for an impartial investigation of the case of Moldova's Prosecutor General, accused of charges of abuse of office, bribery, perjury and facilitation of an organised criminal group, and emphasise that such an investigation must be carried out within the framework of the law and without political interference;
10. support the elimination of roaming charges for electronic communications, on the basis of the model already existing in the EU, the taking of further steps towards energy and ICT interconnection, and modernisation of the road/rail interconnection infrastructure between the EU and the Republic of Moldova;
11. call for the necessary support from the Moldovan authorities to bring Moldova into the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) and are pleased to see the implementation of many initiatives in this regard;
12. call for the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national healthcare system to be effectively addressed, for its capacities to be strengthened and for digitalisation to be fostered, in order to increase the transparency, efficiency and accountability of the stakeholders and to support access to high-quality services and the retention of medical personnel.
13. are concerned at the low level of implementation of the transport component of the Association Agreement and in this regard, note that the cost of the liberalised system should be brought into line with the European average level for transport, to ensure smoother integration into the common European transport space;

With regard to implementation of the Association Agreement in the fields of social and labour relations:

14. welcome the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to improve collective bargaining processes in cooperation with trade unions and employers' organisations and to resume social dialogue at national level as soon as possible by reviving the National Commission for Collective Consultation and Bargaining;

15. call on the Government of the Republic of Moldova to improve the process of collective bargaining at national and branch level and to resume the activity of the National Commission for Collective Consultation and Bargaining, in strict accordance with the provisions of Law No 245/2006 on the organisation and functioning of the National Commission for Collective Consultations and Negotiations, of the Commissions for Collective Consultations and Negotiations at branch and territorial level, ensuring that its meetings are held at least once monthly;
16. call for a discussion to be opened on establishing an autonomous institution similar to the European Economic and Social Committee in the Republic of Moldova;
17. are concerned to see decent work-related initiatives hindered by the economic crisis and the pandemic crisis. Reiterate the importance of conducting genuine bargaining between social partners aimed at establishing new minimum wage levels and at improving social protection;
18. reiterate the need to set a single minimum wage in the country, in line with the recommendations of the revised European Social Charter, to ensure compliance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, including between women and men;
19. draw the attention of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to the need to implement strictly the provisions of Law No 270/2018 on the unitary salary system in the budget sector, especially relating to the payment of the annual bonus to employees in the budget sector;
20. in this regard, welcome the recent signature of the next Decent Work Country Programme between the Republic of Moldova and the International Labour Organization on creating more and better jobs for Moldova in the coming four years;
21. recommend that concrete actions be taken urgently to combat undeclared or partially-declared work and pay, which should be monitored by the national government;
22. propose amending Law No 22 of 23 February 2018 regarding the exercise of unskilled activities of an occasional nature carried out by day labourers, including in order to introduce various efficient mechanisms, such as vouchers, for instance, when hiring such workers;
23. recommend improving the pension system in the Republic of Moldova in order to enhance the mechanism for recalculating pensions for pensioners who continue to work;
24. draw attention to the need to speed up the adoption of a policy document in the field of occupational safety and health, in accordance with the international commitments that the Republic of Moldova has given;
25. recommend aligning national legislation with ILO Conventions No 81 on labour inspections in industry and trade and No 129 on labour inspections in agriculture) to consolidate the status and capacity of the State Labour Inspectorate.