



## **SECURITY AND DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

1. The European Union (EU) and the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) face an increasingly challenging security environment inter alia due to ongoing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU and Moldova are committed to strengthening rules-based international order and upholding the respect for the United Nations (UN) Charter.
2. Relations between the EU and Moldova are based on the Association Agreement (including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area -DCFTA-) and founded on shared values of democracy, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. The Association Agreement refers to a joint commitment to deepen cooperation of the parties in the field of security and defence.
3. The EU recognised Moldova's substantial progress and commitment to reforms on its EU path. In view of this, the European Council in December 2023 took the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Moldova and in March 2024 invited the Council to swiftly adopt the negotiating framework and to take the work forward without delay.
4. The EU and Moldova have respectively adopted important strategic documents that will guide their security and defence policies for the upcoming years. The EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence adopted in 2022 sets out a clear vision for a more robust EU role in security and defence, with strong tailored partnerships at its core. Moldova's National Security Strategy, adopted in December 2023, identifies EU accession as one of the key objectives and aims at expanding collaboration with the EU and other allies and partners, to address transnational challenges.

5. Both the EU and Moldova seek to seize the momentum to further intensify cooperation to better address shared challenges and strengthen Moldova's resilience. The EU and Moldova therefore undertake to further develop, deepen and strengthen cooperation and dialogue across the whole range of security and defence topics, making use of existing frameworks and exploring new cooperation avenues, taking into account that security increasingly encompasses a broader range of closely linked dimensions, such as cyber and hybrid threats, including disinformation.

### **General Framework**

6. The EU and Moldova have decided to establish and implement a tailor-made, mutually beneficial Security and Defence Partnership, underpinned by a series of dialogue mechanisms to provide steering and oversight:

- ◇ Making use of the EU-Moldova Association Council to ensure monitoring of the implementation of the Security and Defence Partnership and provide guidance as appropriate.
- ◇ The annual EU-Moldova High Level Political and Security Dialogue (at the EU side Political Director and Moldova's side Foreign Minister/State Secretary) will be a key format to discuss political and security landscape of the region, as well as to discuss peace, security and defence issues.
- ◇ Upgrading the existing EU-Moldova security and defence consultations to an annual EU-Moldova Security and Defence Dialogue at Head of Directorate / Managing Director level, to discuss the broad strategic environment, thematic and geographic security and defence issues, to explore possible cooperation and, as appropriate, to prepare deliverables and ground for discussions at the EU-Moldova Association Council and the EU-Moldova High Level Political and Security Dialogue.
- ◇ Exploring the establishment of additional thematic consultations on specific domains of shared interest (such as on cyber issues, countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) etc).

7. The EU and Moldova will work toward expanding the scope of and increasing the classification level of information that can be exchanged based on the current agreement on security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information, by assisting Moldova in transposing and

implementing the EU standards and building capacities related to protection of classified information, including exchange of the classified information in digital format.

8. The EU and Moldova will increase coordination in multilateral fora, including with other like-minded partners in relevant areas.

### **Areas of Cooperation**

9. In addition to exchanges on security and defence policies and relevant regional security, as well as strategic and geopolitical issues in order to better align each other's policy, the EU and Moldova will hold targeted consultations and boost cooperation in the following areas:

#### EU CSDP missions and operations

10. Moldova will continue its participation in the EU CSDP missions and operations. The EU and Moldova will continue developing and strengthening Moldova's military forces and capabilities, including with a view to consolidate participation in EU military CSDP missions and operations. This may entail, once decided, Moldova's contribution to the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity deployment, as well as in EU military exercises, including live ones, as appropriate. The EU and Moldova will examine options for developing Moldova's civilian capacities with a view to experts' participation in EU civilian CSDP missions.

#### Countering hybrid threats

11. The EU and Moldova will further deepen cooperation on countering hybrid threats, including by sharing analysis and promoting cooperation between academic institutions, think tanks and centres of excellence on both sides.

12. The EU and Moldova will continue the follow-up to the relaunched Hybrid Risk Survey completed in 2023, including the implementation of its recommendations.

13. The EU Partnership Mission in Moldova (EUPM) will contribute to strengthen Moldova's crisis management structures and enhance its resilience to hybrid threats.

14. The EU and Moldova will share best practices in developing strategies, structures and policies, including diplomatic responses to hybrid threats, and will participate in exercises organised by both sides as appropriate.

## Cyber issues

15. The EU and Moldova will deepen the existing cooperation, including by enhancing regular exchanges on the cyber threat landscape, respective policy frameworks and practical cooperative efforts in multilateral fora, including the UN. The EU and Moldova will also exchange on tools to prevent, deter and respond to malicious cyber activities, including through diplomatic measures in the framework of EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox.

16. The EU will further support Moldova's efforts to strengthen cyber resilience, including through cyber capacity building and rapid response assistance, where relevant. EUPM will further provide strategic advice and operational support to Moldova's National Cyber Security Agency. The EU will continue supporting Moldova with the implementation of the 2023 Cybersecurity law.

## Capacity building in security and defence

17. The EU and Moldova will continue advancing cooperation under the European Peace Facility to enhance Moldova's national security, stability and resilience in the defence sector. Building on EPF support, the EU will continue to support the Moldovan Armed Forces efforts to enhance their operational effectiveness, accelerate compliance with EU standards and interoperability, and thereby better protect civilians in crises and emergencies. The EU will continue to support the strengthening of Moldova's capacities to participate in EU military CSDP missions and operations.

## Strategic communications and countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)

18. The EU and Moldova will proactively share information on threats assessments in the disinformation domain through bilateral exchanges on FIMI and explore the possibility for operational cooperation.

19. The EU will further support Moldova in building capacities of its institutions to counter FIMI and to increase information resilience of the population, including by operationalisation of the Center for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation.

## Non-proliferation and disarmament, conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons (SALW)

20. The EU and Moldova will deepen consultations on non-proliferation, disarmament, conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons.

### Counterterrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism

21. The EU and Moldova will explore the potential for cooperation on CT related matters by designing activities for greater interaction between CT-P/CVE agencies, such as addressing the online dimension of radicalisation or the community policing approach to countering violent extremism.

### Consultations on relevant defence initiatives, tools and instruments

22. The EU and Moldova will consult on their respective defence initiatives, tools and instruments. They will i.a. explore the possibilities and interest for Moldova's participation in PESCO projects, in line with the general conditions under which third States could exceptionally be invited to participate in individual PESCO projects, in accordance with the relevant EU and Moldova rules and procedures as well as in the initiatives related to defence industry, including joint procurement. In addition, holding technical consultations between the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the Ministry of Defence of Moldova will also be explored in line with the respective processes.

### Training and education

23. The EU and Moldova will continue cooperation in the field of training and education related to the CSDP, including developing cooperation with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). The activities will include participation in the ESDC activities, organising training and education activities in collaboration with an ESDC Network Member as the ESDC Associate Network Partner (e.g. the Armed Forces Military Academy and Ștefan cel Mare Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs).

### Integrated border management

24. The EU and Moldova will explore opportunities for further cooperation in the external dimension of integrated border management, including irregular migration/human trafficking, fight against transnational organised crime and arms trafficking using the platform offered by the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova (Security Hub).

### Women Peace and Security

25. The EU and Moldova are committed to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which consists of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, and will ensure that gender equality is integrated in their areas of cooperation on security and defence.

26. Therefore, the EU and Moldova will exchange good practices on implementing women, peace and security commitments, and continue close collaboration to ensure gender equality as a political and security related priority and with an aim to reinforce joint responses to current and emerging security and geopolitical shifts.

### **Way Forward**

27. The areas identified in the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed regularly in the framework of the EU-Moldova Security and Defence Dialogue, taking stock of progress made, giving further impetus, and reporting to the EU-Moldova Association Council with a view to exploring ways to further strengthen and develop the cooperation.

28. The content of the Security and Defence Partnership will be reviewed as appropriate.