

Speech by Ana GUȚU
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European Union and the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy
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Honorable audience,

Excellences,

Dear Participants,

It is an honor and pleasure to greet you in the framework of this meeting, which takes place before a historical moment for the Republic of Moldova, Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit, which will lay solid foundation for the continuation of democratic transformation in Moldova and will create necessary momentum for the irreversibility of European trajectory of our country. Today's meeting represents a unique opportunity for the Parliaments of the European Union member states and the Parliaments of the countries of the Eastern Partnership to strengthen cooperation in order to ensure appropriate legitimacy of the upcoming event, and to consolidate parliamentary dimension of democratic development.

The Association Agreement, that is going to be concluded with the European Union at this Summit, will establish an adequate legal framework for necessary advancement of the relationship between Moldova and the European Union to a much more developed stage of cooperation, manifested in political association and economic integration. European aspirations of our country derive from the strategic vision and strong belief of our adherence to European civilization through sharing of common values, and the perspective of reaching the final goal of European integration.

In our vision, the Association Agreement, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, represents the unique development opportunity with sufficient potential for raising policy reform credibility, boosting investment, changing economic growth paradigm from consumption to export, consolidation of fight against corruption and ensuring transparent and fair judiciary. The continuation of fight against corruption, strongly intensified after the arrival of new Government in power, will lead to substantial decrease of shadow economy, will facilitate creation of the favorable investment climate, will consolidate stability of regulatory framework, and will eliminate barriers for the activity of foreign investors.

For the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, the Association Agreement is an immense opportunity, but also an important challenge since it implies substantial increase of the degree and depth of harmonization of the national legislation with European body of law. In general, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and the Committee for Foreign Policy and European Integration, plays an important role in getting closer to the European Union. It is reflected primarily in ensuring of political control over Government, line ministries, independent regulatory agencies in implementing European commitments. In this respect, there was established and became functional particular practice of coordination, communication and ensuring an information exchange between the Parliament and the Government in what concerns policy priorities and legislative creation. This practice has allowed the improvement of the

process of elaboration and approval of critically important laws, required for undertaking democratic reforms in the Republic of Moldova in order to get closer to Europe.

Specifically, legislative activity was concentrated on consolidation of national capacities for meeting successfully the challenge of competitive pressures, flowing from trade liberalization, and the fulfillment of commitments within visa liberalization dialogue. A number of bold and structural reforms were made in order to meet food safety requirements, to adjust to particular technical regulations and quality infrastructure, ensure adequate competition and state aid framework for facilitating gradual access to European Single Market in order to obtain maximum benefits from Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. In particular, Committee for Foreign Policy and European Integration made substantial efforts to ensure the compatibility with EU rules of origin, raising competitiveness and diversifying production, improving marketing and selling capacities of domestic goods, including in the framework of facilitating the access of Moldovan wines to European market.

In what concerns visa liberalization dialogue, the Republic of Moldova made efforts to implement conditionality, attached to the EU-Moldova Visa Liberalization Action Plan through undertaking bold reforms in justice and interior sectors, country being the first Eastern Partnership participant, which started the implementation of second phase. Our overall expectation relates to continuous liberalization of the movement of people, final goal being visa-free travel.

It is beyond doubt that the Association Agreement will bring its contribution to the consolidation of administrative and institutional absorption capacities of European aid. Along these lines, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to European partners for the support European integration and modernization path. We are very grateful to the European Parliament, European Commission, and member states for continuous support of our efforts aiming at social development, strengthening democracy and building functioning market economy in Moldova.

In our view, extensive programs of Comprehensive Institutional Building, improved access to EU Single Market, substantial financing in form of investment, credits and budgetary grants are very welcomed, and will certainly contribute to strengthening of our country performance on its European path. Against this background, I want to stress the necessity to create as many opportunities as possible for facilitating the contacts between the Republic of Moldova and EU member states for better understanding of country domestic situation. Continuous approach of European Union member states, founded on the specific criteria for performance measurement and application of the formula “more for more” permanently mobilize us to overcome successfully all the internal and external, political and economic challenges.

In this respect, we welcome the intention of the European Union to launch a new programme, called “Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation”, which will focus on promoting democratic transformation and institution building, sustainable and inclusive growth and increased confidence building measures. This assistance and the role of mediator, played by the European Union, are very important in the framework of our country reintegration efforts, which we promote under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 5+2 negotiation format, often despite unfavorable circumstances and external political and economic pressures.

Likewise, we welcome the efforts of the European Union aiming to facilitate the participation of Moldova in the activities of EU agencies and EU programmes. The Republic of Moldova has been associated to the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development since January 2012. We express our commitment to negotiate the protocols of

Moldova's participation in EU Programmes, and we greet the openness of the European Union to partially cover associated costs, and consolidate of cooperation with partner countries in higher education cooperation programmes, such as Erasmus Mundus and Tempus.

Further development of good relations in the period of crucial significance for the Republic of Moldova, is extremely important both before the Summit, but also in the period after the Summit. After the Agreement with the Republic of Moldova will be initialed, our country will undertake necessary efforts for provisional implementation of the Association Agreement, which will build on the performance obtained in implementing EU-Moldova Action Plan within European Neighborhood Policy. The Parliament and the Government of Moldova will implement European Agenda, which will become an integral part of Activity Program of the Government. The Committee for Foreign Policy and European Integration of Moldova will regularly monitor the performance of Executive in implementing the Agenda.

Simultaneously, the Parliament *par excellence* represents the legislative supreme body, which, despite various differences of views and domestic political challenges, has the mission to consolidate social interests, including the opinions that apparently cannot be reconciled, and to ensure wide national consensus and democratic legitimacy for the long term development. I would like to mention that during this important time for Moldova, we succeeded in tackling numerous challenges and to consolidate ourselves in our aspirations to become part of great European family of nations. In our way to Vilnius we overcame political instability through renouncement to differences in opinions or visions, and ensured the continuation of our European path.

Furthermore, it is our belief that by adhering to European way of development it will be possible to build democratic legitimacy of the state, to ensure effective prevention of conflicts, to consolidate social cohesion on the basis of strong feeling of belonging to the value-based European space. The Committee, which I represent, is continuously undertaking measures for informing and convincing the citizens that only through common effort of all society members will be possible to reap full benefits of the Association Agreement, such as fair, transparent and correct judiciary, more chances for people mobility, and more possibilities for making profit.

I would like to mention that Eastern Partnership represents not only a platform for domestic cohesion and country reintegration, but also solid basis for more ambitious parliamentary cooperation at pan-European level, which fits well with the topic of today's meeting. At the basis of our motivation to participate in Eastern Partnership lies strong commitment to respecting international law and universal values, including democracy, supremacy of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as market economy, sustainable development and good governance.

Obviously, Moldova has registered important achievements in consolidating rule of law in a young democracy. On the other hand, there are still multiple problems and constraints that can be dealt with, since there is sufficient political will and commitment. In this context, we are still asking for continuous support and understanding of European partners to support our country in realizing its European destiny. It is our strong belief that Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit will be a success, which will accelerate domestic reforms. Our ambition, after the Agreement will be initialed, consists in signing and ratification of Agreement as soon as possible, until the current mandate of European Commission and the Government of Moldova expire, which would make irreversible our European path.

Thank you for your attention.