

## **Joint declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of 8 Nordic-Baltic countries and the Republic of Moldova**

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and representatives of 8 Nordic-Baltic countries Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden held a meeting today in Chisinau with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration as well as with other representatives of the Republic of Moldova. Together we agreed on the following:

We welcome the clear stance Moldova has taken by condemning in the strongest terms the Russian aggression against Ukraine and withstanding its consequences, notably, significant influx of refugees, skyrocketing inflation, energy crisis, massive disinformation attempts and hybrid threats. We stand with Moldova during these challenging times. We are grateful for the burden Moldova has undertaken in assisting over 800.000 Ukrainian refugees that have crossed its border.

We wish to express our common commitment in advancing freedom and democracy. As countries who share common European values, we want to see our societies living in safety, prosperity and liberty. We acknowledge Moldova's view that the best way to achieve a better future for all its people is by joining the family of the European Union.

We welcome the historic granting of EU candidate status for Moldova in June 2022. Acknowledging the substantial security and socioeconomic challenges involved, we commend the Moldova government's determination to fulfill the nine criteria identified by the EU Commission and the European Council and take good note of the progress achieved so far. The Council will decide on further steps once all these conditions are fully met. The process remains merit based. The Republic of Moldova counts that the progress achieved will lead to the decision by the European Council to open the EU accession negotiations. We support measures that demonstrate other tangible benefits of EU integration for the Moldovan people, including further trade liberalization, boosting market access and reduction of roaming charges between the EU and Moldova. We will continue to provide political, financial, and technical support, as well as the necessary expertise to help Moldova's efforts on its road towards EU membership.

We acknowledge and encourage Moldova's continued comprehensive reforms in justice, energy and public governance. Securing solid and irreversible achievements in fundamental areas, such as the rule of law and democratic institutions, is decisive for Moldova's path towards EU membership. Our countries will continue to provide coordinated assistance in implementing reforms, both bilaterally and through the Support Platform for Moldova to help

deal with consequences stemming from Russia's war against Ukraine, including through strengthening resilience and improving the lives of the people of Moldova. In this context, broad information efforts toward the Moldovan people about the benefits of EU integration is of critical importance to counter the vast and harmful disinformation campaigns.

We support Moldova's anti-corruption efforts, since large-scale corruption not only deprives society of much needed resources, but is also a security risk. Furthermore, we support the ongoing EU process to impose restrictive measures on individuals responsible for undermining and destabilizing Moldova's democratic institutions and stability.

We support the peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict on the basis of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. In this regard, we also emphasize the importance of the OSCE Mission and urge its mandate to be extended for a full-year term. We will also continue supporting the activities of other international organizations in Moldova.

Moldova can count on the full support of Nordic and Baltic countries. We are determined to contribute to stability, security and prosperity of Moldova, a great example of this being the EU Partnership Mission in Moldova – a civilian advisory CSDP mission established just days ago, thus boosting our already very close relations and promoting Moldova's place in the family of European nations. We look forward to the upcoming EPC Summit on 1<sup>st</sup> of June that will make Chisinau the political center of Europe on that day.