

PROTOCOL
of the third session of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee on
Economic, Technological and Scientific Cooperation between
the Republic of Moldova and the Hellenic Republic

(Athens, 9 December 2016)

The third session of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee on Economic, Technological and Scientific Cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and the Hellenic Republic was held in Athens on December 9th 2016, in accordance with the provisions of the “Agreement on Economic, Technological and Scientific Cooperation”, signed on March 23, 1998 in Athens.

Deputy Minister of Economy, Vitalie Iurcu, headed the Moldovan Delegation.

Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs, Georgios Katrougkalos, headed the Hellenic Delegation.

The Lists of Participants of both delegations and the Agenda of the Session are attached to this Protocol, as Annexes I and II, respectively.

During the meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee on Economic, Technological and Scientific Cooperation, which was conducted in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and friendship, both sides presented an overview of current developments in their economies, reviewed their bilateral economic relations and stated their readiness to take all necessary measures, in order to improve them, on the basis of mutual interest.

**I. OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC**

The two sides exchanged information concerning issues of bilateral trade, economic and commercial developments in both countries, as well as general information about economic developments and economic policy measures which may facilitate and strengthen the development of their bilateral economic cooperation.

The two sides also exchanged information regarding statistical data on the volume of bilateral trade, according to the respective statistical authorities, that is derived from the National Bureau of Statistics from the Republic of Moldova and the Hellenic Statistical Authority.

During the session, the following issues were discussed by the Committee:

II. BILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND COOPERATION IN THE EU FRAMEWORK

Both sides discussed the prospects regarding the development of trade and economic cooperation and they acknowledged that the range of products traded between the two countries needs to be extended.

The sides stated that the further development on bilateral economic and commercial relations, as well as the promotion of investment opportunities between the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Moldova are common objectives shared by both countries.

Both sides agreed to intensify cooperation between their Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as other agencies, to present their products at local and international Fairs, to create possibilities to enhance economic and commercial cooperation in new sectors and inform the business community about the opportunities existing in their respective countries.

Both sides noted the importance of establishing joint ventures, organising training courses, exchanging experience and holding business missions.

Both sides expressed their willingness to examine the possibility to organise in the following years a business mission from the Hellenic Republic to the Republic of Moldova, as well as a business event / forum dedicated to Moldova in the Hellenic Republic.

The Moldovan side proposed to organize in partnership with the Union of Hellenic Chambers a Roadshow during the Food Expo 2017 - the leading Food & Beverage trade show in South East Europe, which will take place in Athens on 18-20 March 2017. It is proposed that one part of the roadshow will be dedicated to visit the trade fair and participate in B2B meetings and the second part can be freely decided between the partners, taking into account the usefulness of the event for SMEs from both sides.

Furthermore, in view of implementing the objectives of promoting the Moldovan products and services, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova proposes to invite representatives of the Hellenic business community to the National Exhibition "Made in Moldova 2017" (01 – 05 February, 2017), as well as to other important economic events organized in the Republic of Moldova.

The two sides expressed appreciation for the successful conclusion of negotiations which led to the signature of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part, which provisionally entered into force on the 1st of September 2014, on the basis of which the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the EU and Moldova was established. In this framework, Greece and Moldova have expressed their readiness to intensify their cooperation in

order to advance its implementation. The Greek side expressed its willingness to support the Moldovan authorities' efforts for the swift implementation of the Agreement both of individual chapters as well as a whole.

The Moldovan side mentioned that the main requirements in the process of the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the EU, are:

- support in organizing regional seminars on the implementation and harnessing the potential of the DCFTA;
- expertise analyses on the economic and social impact impact of new legislation promoted in the context of the DCFTA such;
- expertise and trainings in order to develop the Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) and facilitate this process.

III. BILATERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Both Parties expressed their willingness to hold a meeting of a Joint Expert Committee on social security within 2017, in order to initiate negotiations for a bilateral agreement on social security between the two countries.

Both sides expressed interest in signing an interagency Memorandum in the field of consumer rights protection between the authorized national Moldovan and Hellenic bodies.

Both sides expressed their willingness to proceed with the amendment of Article 26 on exchange of information of the "Convention between the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Moldova for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on property", following the developments at EU level and OECD level in order to harmonize the relevant provisions and to expand cooperation between the two countries.

The Moldovan side expressed interest in willingness to discuss the possibility of signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Economy and Development of the Hellenic Republic concerning the cooperation in the economic domain.

IV. ENHANCING COOPERATION IN PRIORITY SECTORS

1. Agriculture

Taking into account the expiration of the bilateral Agreement on economic, scientific and technical cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Food Industry, signed on 01.11.1999, the two sides agreed to prepare a new agreement, covering relevant

issues of mutual interest, since an adequate institutional framework is necessary for the promotion of cooperation and the effective promotion of relevant initiatives.

Bearing the above in mind, the two sides reiterated their mutual interest in promoting bilateral cooperation in the agricultural sector, in areas such as food safety and food quality, labelling and marketing, organic production, protection of geographical indications, veterinary issues, phyto-sanitary control, operation, management and supervision of agricultural cooperatives, promotion of women's cooperatives.

The Moldovan Side proposed to develop cooperation through training, study visits and exchange of experience in the fields of production of fruit tree planting material, fruits and vegetables, quality control assurance of fresh fruit and vegetables, valuing horticultural production, including its processing, as well as regarding latest achievements in the agricultural sector in general.

The Moldovan side expressed interest in cooperation with the Greek side on the exchange of expertise in the field of soil water resource management (land reclamation).

The two sides agreed on the importance of promoting bilateral trade of agricultural and food products. In this framework, they agreed to encourage promotion initiatives and participation of Moldovan and Greek companies in exhibitions and fairs in both countries.

Also, the Moldovan side proposed to analyze the possibility of creation of joint ventures in Moldova, specialized on the freezing, sorting and packing of fresh fruits and grapes, on modernization of wineries, on modern planting of vineyards and other kind of yards.

The two sides agreed to encourage cooperation between scientific research institutes of the two countries, indicatively in the following sectors:

- crop production and plant genetic resources, livestock production, fishery and aquaculture, veterinary research, soil water resources management, food safety - including risk assessment of emerging risks and management-, processing, preservation and quality control of agricultural products, certified quality products, rural economy and development, nutrition policy, Codex Alimentarius issues, phytopathological issues (plant health, plant protection, plant protection products, National Reference Laboratories issues, etc.)

The Greek side provided information about the possibility for Moldovan candidates who are holders of bachelor degrees to attend post graduate studies (M.Sc.) at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH).

The Moldovan side informed about the interest expressed by the Scientific-Practical Institute of Biotechnology in Zootechnics and the Veterinary Medicine and the Institute of Crop Production "Porumbeni" of the Republic of Moldova in further

technical-scientific cooperation with similar institutes from the Hellenic Republic in the following areas:

- exchange of technical-scientific information and experience on the scientific research issues and achieved results in zootechnics, biotechnologies and veterinary medicine, maize amelioration, etc.;
- participation of research staff and PhD candidates in different professional internships and specializations at the institutions with zoo-veterinary profile from the Hellenic Republic in the reference fields;
- concluding of a cooperation contract between Institute "Porumbeni" and similar institutes from the Hellenic Republic.

2. Cooperation in the field of Energy

Natural Gas

The sides noted their common objectives with regard to deepening the integration of the European energy market as well as to enhancing energy security through greater diversification of sources and routes of natural gas supply, with the development of infrastructure promoting regional interconnectivity enabling access to existing and planned LNG terminals in Greece.

In this respect, Vertical Corridor represents an excellent source of diversification option for the whole region and thus is considered as a key instrument for enhancing regional energy security.

The sides agreed to cooperate in the natural gas sector through the exchange of expertise with a view to promoting open and transparent markets in line with the Treaty establishing the Energy Community and promote contacts amongst their respective business communities and public undertakings.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

Both sides expressed their understanding of the current status of each country's energy needs and especially those related to energy produced from renewable energy sources.

The Hellenic Center for Renewable Energy Sources (CRES) is willing to strengthen its bilateral cooperation with Moldovan counterparts with the aim of developing common actions in the energy field with specific reference to Renewable Energy Sources (RES), energy saving and energy efficiency (EE). Fields of activities/energy initiatives, encouraging technological and scientific dimension – innovation through pilot projects are:

- Energy policy and Planning
- Renewable Energies (Solar, thermal, PV, Biomass energy, Biofuels, Wind energy)

- Energy Efficiency (Buildings, Transport),
- Assessment of Renewable Energy- estimation of physical and technical resource potential, economic analysis and market potential,
- Assessment of EE in buildings and identification/implementation of pilot demonstration projects.
- Strategic planning for RES and EE
- Capacity Building programs.

Both sides expressed their willingness to encourage their companies and agencies to cooperate in the field of energy. In this respect, the Greek side expressed its interest in ongoing or future projects in Moldova which concerning renewable energy sources, given its know-how in various fields of renewable energies. This was highly welcomed by Moldovan side given that the supporting mechanisms of RE projects and state interest in developing this particular sector is a top subject on the Government Agenda.

The Moldovan side highlighted its commitments under the Energy Community Treaty regarding transposition and implementation of the EU directives on energy efficiency, energy performance of buildings, use of renewable energy. etc., challenges related to the implementation exercise and the opportunity to learn on Greek experience in overcoming existing barriers and bottlenecks.

3. Standardization and Quality Infrastructure

The Hellenic side informed that the Cooperation Agreement, signed between the Hellenic Organization for Standardization (ELOT) and the Department of Standardization and Metrology of the Republic of Moldova (MOLDST) in 2007, could not be pursued in its full capacity due to the establishment of the National Quality Infrastructure System (NQIS) in 2013, part of which Organization is ELOT.

However, the two sides, wishing to activate the above Cooperation Agreement in the area of Standardization and Quality Infrastructure, agreed to explore the possibility of an updated cooperation framework, in the form of a Memorandum of Cooperation.

4. Tourism

Both sides agreed to enhance their bilateral tourist flows, agreed to promote the development and strengthening of cooperation in the field of tourism. They also expressed their willingness to promote their cooperation through the exchange of know-how and best practices in the field of Special Interest Tourism, with an emphasis on wine tourism, rural tourism, religious tourism and cultural tourism.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the direct flight connection between Chisinau and Athens during the summer season in the last years and agreed to encourage their national competent authorities to prolong direct air connection during the winter season in the future.

They also agreed to enhance their cooperation in the framework of the Commission for Europe of the World Tourism Organization and the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

5. Transport

Road Freight and Passenger Transport

On 30/11/1992 the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Moldova signed in Athens the Agreement on International Motor Transport Services, which has been ratified from both sides and came into force on 06/01/1996.

Under the Protocol of the Meeting of the Joint Moldovan-Hellenic Transport Committee held in Athens, on 20-21 November 2012 the sides agreed to increase the number of permits for bilateral and transit transport to 1500 per year. This Agreement validates the enhanced cooperation and strengthens the economic bonds between the two countries in the sector of road transport.

The Greek side expressed its readiness to participate in the forthcoming Joint Committee of Road Transport. The precise date and place would be agreed through diplomatic channels.

Air Transport

Both sides took note of the longstanding bilateral aviation relations and expressed their desire for further development of the air transport links between the two countries. The Greek side also informed that it has completed its internal legal procedures necessary for the ratification of the "Common Aviation Area Agreement between the European Union and its Member States and the Republic of Moldova" which will integrate the respective markets, strengthen cooperation and offer new opportunities for consumers and airlines, and wished for its entry into force at the earliest possible date.

6. Industry and foreign investments

The Greek side expressed interest in enhancing bilateral cooperation at building-up modern Moldovan infrastructures, such as road networks, water pipelines, sewage, ICT interconnections etc, by providing know-how, technology transfer and entrepreneurial activity.

The Greek side provided information concerning the new investment law 4399/16, “Institutional framework for the creation of Private Investment Aid schemes for the regional and economic development of the country - Establishment of the Development Council and other provisions”, which aims to facilitate and enhance the implementation of investment projects, to enhance competitiveness in sectors of high added value, to increase employment etc.

The Greek side stressed the importance of protection and equal treatment of Greek investments in Moldova, in accordance with the provisions of the 1998 bilateral Agreement for the promotion and mutual protection of investments.

Both sides agreed to exchange information on the relevant exhibitions and fairs organized in both countries, will participate in joint projects, and will submit regularly information on the commercial offers and requests of the Moldovan and Greek enterprises.

The two sides, recognizing the importance and mutual benefit deriving from their cooperation in the industrial field, expressed their readiness to develop and strengthen such cooperation, through the encouragement of entrepreneurship, the promotion of business cooperation, and the creation of an attractive business environment for the development of joint ventures between entrepreneurs from the two countries with the aim of taking advantage of investment opportunities.

The Moldovan side informed the Greek side about their priority in promoting cooperation for the creation and development of industrial parks in regions of the Republic of Moldova and attraction of Hellenic investments in this field. The Hellenic side took note of the Moldovan interest and informed accordingly about such infrastructures in Greece and their readiness to host Moldovan enterprises as well as the availability of the Greek Authorities to provide expertise on the organization and operation of industrial parks.

The Moldovan side stressed the importance of cluster development for the internationalisation of enterprises, the attraction of investments and the promotion and diversification of exports. They expressed their interest in promoting business cooperation in this field with a view to boosting the creation of new jobs, stimulating innovation and modernising the production process.

The two sides also agreed to explore the possibility of cooperation in such sectors as the food industry, agriculture, energy, construction, etc.

7. Cooperation in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation

The Greek side agrees for the importance of the cooperation with the Moldovan side in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation and intend to proceed to the opening of the bilateral cooperation by the end of 2017 or beginning of 2018. The Greek side considers that a preparatory joint committee will establish, at this time,

the terms and the conditions of the future bilateral cooperation, the thematic priorities to implement, as well as the other activities to be undertaken.

8. Cooperation in the field of Small and Medium sized Enterprises and the Entrepreneurship

Taking into consideration the role of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) for development and economic growth, both sides agreed to enhance their cooperation in this field. Such cooperation could include the exchange of information between the General Secretariat of Industry of the Hellenic Republic – acting as the competent Authority for SMEs in Greece – and the Organisation for SMEs Development from the Republic of Moldova (ODIMM), know-how and best practices in the area of SMEs support policies, with emphasis on innovation and internationalization, and especially in the fields of technological transfer and the business innovation by providing support to enterprises for their participation in international projects, in order to improve SMEs competitiveness and enhance their access to international markets, including through matchmaking events and commercial missions.

The Greek side, acknowledging the significance of start-ups as a driver for economic growth and innovation, informed the Moldovan side about the governmental initiative “StartUpGreece”, a digital platform providing targeted support to the Greek start-ups in the form of information, networking and collaboration opportunities for the promotion of entrepreneurship, competitiveness and business innovation.

Both sides expressed their willingness to explore ways for broadening the cooperation between the two countries in this field.

Furthermore, the Moldovan side proposed:

- enhancing cooperation for the establishment of New Business Incubators.
- promoting the exchange of experiences in the important field of access to finance and especially concerning guarantee schemes and credit management for entrepreneurs, as well as venture capital. The Greek side acknowledged the importance of the issue and expressed availability to share good practices and expertise in this field.

9. Collaboration in the field of Interregional Cooperation

The two sides agreed to:

- enhance and upgrade the current forms of territorial cooperation among local government entities and their associations (twinning of cities, cities networks, cooperation protocols);

- examine the institutional framework which governs the territorial cooperation in the two countries;
- examine the possibility of creating local and regional government special purpose networks, within the framework of special sectoral policies with a view to promoting territorial development in the two countries;
- identify and make the best use of the relevant territorial cooperation financing tools and programmes of the EU;
- cooperate in the field of capacity building through projects developing, monitoring, implementation and evaluation financed from the European Union funds, including cross-border co-operation programmes;
- contribute at the capacity building of local public authorities in promoting cross-border cooperation according to European Union regulations and practices;
- cooperate on regional development and spatial planning (best practices in regional and local strategic and spatial planning, methodology of development program's development at the local and regional level);
- exchange information and experience on energy performance of buildings and energy efficiency;
- improve the bilateral cooperation in the fields of: architecture and design, spatial planning and construction, quality management in construction, renovation of residential and administrative areas, modern technologies in construction materials;
- exchange information about promoting housing policy, programs and practice to ensure social housing to vulnerable groups of population.

10. Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Education and Science

The two sides expressed their willingness to further enhance and broaden their cooperation in the fields of education, science and culture and greeted the signing of the first Executive Programme, based upon the Agreement on Co-operation in the fields of Culture, Education and Science, signed in Athens, on June 12, 2007. Further cooperation on these fields will be pursued within the framework of the Joint Committee established on the basis of Article 12 of the said Agreement.

In the framework of UNESCO, the two Sides expressed their willingness to explore ways to further support the safeguarding of their cultural heritage and combat illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

11. Development aid

The Greek side stated that Moldova is considered as a priority destination of Greek development co-operation policy and assistance. Total bilateral Official Development

Assistance (ODA) granted by Greece to Moldova in the years 1998-2014 amounted to 22.33 million USD, while Official Export Credits reached 4.80 million USD. During the five year period 2010-2014 and despite the unfavorable fiscal situation, total bilateral development assistance allocated by Greece to Moldova amounted to 5.36 million USD, which was primarily channeled to the sector of education. To the extent that Greece's budgetary capacity would allow, efforts will be undertaken to formulate an improved framework of development cooperation between the two countries.

V. PLACE AND DATE FOR THE NEXT SESSION

Both sides agreed that the 4th session of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee will take place in Chisinau. The precise date will be agreed upon through diplomatic channels.

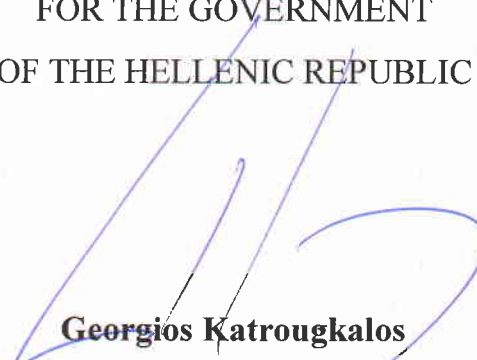
Done in Athens on December 9th, 2016 in two originals in the English language.

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