

## **Joint Statement on the Relaunch of the U.S.-Moldova Strategic Dialogue**

*Following is the text of a joint statement by the Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Moldova.*

*Begin Text:*

The Governments of the United States of America (United States) and the Republic of Moldova (Moldova) held a meeting of the U.S. – Moldova Strategic Dialogue in Washington, D.C. on April 18, 2022, as well as political consultations between U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Nicu Popescu.

The United States and Moldova celebrated 30 years of diplomatic relations in February. The importance of that relationship is reflected in the \$1.7 billion in foreign assistance funding the United States provided to Moldova since 1992 and the nearly three-fold increase in annual foreign assistance the United States has announced for Moldova since Russia's February 24 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The relaunch of the Strategic Dialogue, with the first principals' meeting since 2017, demonstrates the deepening partnership between our two countries. The United States and Moldova reaffirmed the importance of strengthening bilateral ties and advancing Moldova's democracy, prosperity, and security as set in its reform agenda. The United States commends Moldova's steps towards progressing further on its European integration path, particularly in view of the recent submission of Moldova's application to join the EU. The United States and Moldova continue to stand together to address the humanitarian crisis caused by Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine, while increasing support for Moldova to address the short- and long-term economic and social impacts.

The United States and Moldova discussed shared priorities in the global fight against corruption, advancing human rights, and strengthening good governance. The United States and Moldova underline the importance of international cooperation in the fight against corruption as a national security priority. The United States commended Moldova's efforts to reform anti-corruption agencies and advance asset recovery, increase transparency and judicial independence, and focus on continued consultation with civil society and other partners to ensure an inclusive reform process and lasting progress. They also decided to enhance cooperation and information sharing to support anti-corruption investigations and curb illicit finance and money laundering. Moldova identified areas where ongoing and planned U.S. assistance is expected to build capacity for investigating and prosecuting corruption and promoting justice sector accountability and transparency, including support of the pre-vetting and vetting process in the judiciary and scale-up of model court programs. The United States and Moldova also discussed opportunities for technical cooperation to support Moldova's forensic systems and increase capacity of law enforcement institutions. Moldova expressed appreciation for the United States' intention to support the reform of the national correctional system, with regard to detention conditions in compliance with international norms.

The governments acknowledged the crucial role that free and independent media play in a democracy and affirmed their commitment to continued partnership to promote a level playing field in Moldova's media sector, support independent media, and advance rights-respecting policies to counter Russian disinformation.

The United States and Moldova recognized the importance of further cooperation to strengthen democracy and promote human rights. They discussed increasing protections for vulnerable communities, including women, LGBTQI+ persons, Roma, the Jewish community, persons with disabilities, and refugees, as well as addressing impunity for hate-based crimes. They also discussed the importance of making progress on legislation for restitution of or compensation for Jewish communal property and also property of other religious groups stolen by the Nazis and subsequently nationalized during the Soviet period. The United States and Moldova discussed further cooperation to conduct mapping of communal properties that represent historical or cultural value for the Jewish community and to study the practice of other countries in this regard.

The United States underscored its continued respect for Moldova's constitutional neutrality and its steadfast support for Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States and Moldova acknowledged the dramatic change in the regional security situation caused by Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine and its impacts on Moldova and other countries in the region. Within the security working group, they discussed efforts to promote reforms and modernize Moldova's security sector, including border management, law enforcement, national defense, and support to international peacekeeping operations as a crisis response tool requiring a focused, capability-based approach.

The discussions highlighted ongoing efforts to promote cooperation and build capacity to strengthen Moldova's border security and help authorities combat cross-border threats. The United States and Moldova also discussed the importance of building and strengthening cybersecurity capacities, including working together to help implement Moldova's plans for government cyber modernization and to identify and protect critical infrastructure. The Moldovan side also expressed the need to enhance strategic communication capabilities to further build resilience and counter disinformation as part of its crisis response.

The United States and Moldova paid particular attention to ensuring Moldovan authorities have the resources necessary to continue effectively to receive refugees fleeing Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine and to provide protection for vulnerable populations.

Cooperation on economic and energy issues remains a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship. Both countries emphasized the importance of strengthening Moldova's energy security and ongoing cooperation to promote market reforms and integrate Moldova's energy systems with the rest of Europe. They intend to continue to cooperate in support of Moldova's energy diversification and to reduce its dependence on Russian energy supplies. Further cooperation also will contribute to sustainable development of the Moldovan energy sector, through development of renewable energy sources and reducing energy consumption by promoting energy efficiency. They discussed economic and commercial engagement to increase Moldova's prosperity, including additional U.S. assistance to advance the transparency, efficiency, and

competitiveness in key sectors of the Moldovan economy and further increase bilateral trade and investment. Both countries will continue to identify opportunities to deepen economic ties in high-potential sectors such as digital and communications technology.

Recognizing the importance of the bilateral relationship, the United States welcomed the Moldovan government's decision paving the way for the construction of a new U.S. Embassy in Chisinau. The project, which will include a public park, will support expanded diplomatic engagement and bring benefits to the residents of Chisinau.

The United States and Moldova also recognized the importance of people-to-people ties between the United States and Moldova, including educational, cultural, and professional exchanges. The governments decided to launch an additional working group under the Strategic Dialogue to strengthen people-to-people connections and cultural ties.

The Strategic Dialogue was hosted by the U.S. Department of State and included interagency and inter-ministerial representatives from both governments. The U.S. delegation included representatives from the Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Commerce, Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The Moldovan delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Presidential Administration, and the Prime Minister's Cabinet.

The United States and Moldova underscored their shared interest in continuing the activities of the dialogue's working groups and in further cooperation to strengthen bilateral ties, rooted in our shared democratic values and common interests. Both countries determined to hold the next meeting of the Strategic Dialogue in Chisinau, Moldova in 2023.

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