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2026/0362 (NLE)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road, as regards the continuation of the Agreement

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. SUBJECT MATTER OF THE PROPOSAL

This proposal concerns the decision establishing the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road (hereinafter "the Agreement") in connection with the envisaged adoption of a decision concerning the continuation of the Agreement, in accordance with Article 6(2) therein.

2. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

2.1. The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road

The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road, signed in Lyon on 29 June 2022[1], aims to temporarily facilitate road freight transport between and through the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter 'Moldova') and the European Union, by granting additional rights of transit and carriage of goods between Moldova and the EU.

The Agreement has been provisionally applied since 29 June 2022. It was approved on behalf of the European Union[2] and entered into force on 21 August 2023[3]. By Decision No 2/2022 of the Joint Committee[4], the Agreement was extended until 30 June 2024. By Decision No 1/2024 of the Joint Committee[5], it was extended until 31 December 2025. By Decision No 1/2025 of the Joint Committee[6] it was again extended, until 31 March 2027.

2.2. The Joint Committee

Article 6(1) of the Agreement established a Joint Committee to supervise and monitor the application and implementation of the Agreement. According to Article 6(3), the Joint Committee is composed by representatives of the Parties.

Pursuant to Article 6(2), the Joint Committee decides, in particular, on the continuation of the Agreement. In this regard, the Joint Committee shall be convened at the latest three months before the expiry of the Agreement – that is to say, at the latest on 31 December 2026 – in

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1 OJ L 181, 7.7.2022, p. 4, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2022/1165/oj.

2 Council Decision (EU) 2022/2417 of 5 December 2022 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the carriage of freight by road (OJ L 318, 12.12.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/2417/oj).

3 OJ L 226, 14.9.2023, p. 1.

4 Decision No 2/2022 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the carriage of freight by road of 15 December 2022 regarding the continuation of the Agreement (OJ L 79, 17.3.2023, p. 185, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/604/oj).

5 Decision No 1/2024 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the carriage of freight by road of 26 March 2024 as regards the continuation of the Agreement (OJ L, 2024/1266, 30.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/1266/oj).

6 Decision No 1/2025 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road of 19 September 2025 as regards the continuation of the Agreement (OJ L, 2025/2252, 25.11.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2252/oj).

order to assess and decide on the need for the continuation of the Agreement, and the duration thereof.

According to Article 6(5) of the Agreement, the Joint Committee must adopt its decisions by consensus.

The European Commission represents the Union in the Joint Committee. According to Article 6(3) of the Agreement, the representatives of the Member States may attend the meetings of the Joint Committee as observers.

2.3. The envisaged act of the Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is to adopt a decision regarding the continuation of the Agreement ('the envisaged act').

The purpose of the envisaged act is to prolongate the Agreement until 31 March 2029.

The envisaged act will become binding on the parties, in accordance with Article 6(5) of the Agreement, which provides that the decisions of the Joint Committee 'shall be binding on the Parties, which shall take all necessary measures to implement them.'

3. POSITION TO BE TAKEN ON THE UNION'S BEHALF

3.1. Summary of the Agreement

The Agreement has significantly facilitated road freight transport between and through Moldova and the European Union, by granting additional rights of transit and carriage of goods between Moldova and the EU, following Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and the significant disruptions it brings for the road transport sector in Moldova. It has been an important support to the economy of Moldova, a country that has lost access to important trade routes via Ukraine's Black Sea ports, and the northern transport links to Central Asia.

3.2. Monitoring of the Agreement

Article 6(1) of the Agreement requires the Joint Committee to monitor the Agreement through, in particular, a periodic review of its functioning in light of its objectives. In this context, the Commission has acquired data on the implementation of the Agreement that also cover the period after the last extension, including the year 2025. The findings from these data are set out below.

3.2.1. The Agreement has successfully supported the Moldovan economy by substantially increasing the exports by road from Moldova to the EU

Trade between Moldova and the EU has increased since the entry into force of the Agreement.

In volume, exports by road from Moldova to the EU increased from 991 million tonnes in 2021 to 1.2 million tonnes in 2025 which represents a 20% increase compared to the period before the Agreement.

In value terms, Moldovan exports by road to the EU increased from EUR 1.5 billion in 2021 to EUR 1.6 billion in 2025, which represents a 7% increase compared to the period before the Agreement.

3.2.2. The Agreement has also been very beneficial to the EU

The value of EU exports to Moldova has steadily increased since the entry into force of the Agreement in 2022. In 2025, the value of EU exports to Moldova by road was EUR 4.3 billion according to Eurostat data, which is a 14% increase compared to 2023 (EUR 3.8 billion), and a 50% increase compared to 2021 (EUR 2.9 billion) before the Agreement.

The positive effect of the Agreement for the EU can also be seen from the fact that the road trade balance with Moldova increased from EUR 1.3 billion in 2021 to EUR 2.6 billion in 2025 in favour of the EU, which is a 98% increase compared to the period before the Agreement.

Most Member States experienced a clear and significant positive trend in their exports to Moldova. Romania, the main trade partner, saw an increase of exports towards Moldova from EUR 1.1 billion in 2021 to EUR 1.5 billion in 2025, a 37% increase.

As regards the road transport sector, the increase in exports due to the Agreement has resulted in an increase in Moldovan trucks on EU roads, but the number in absolute terms remains very limited. In 2024, the number of Moldovan trucks that were active in transporting goods to the EU was only around 19 000, which corresponds to only 0.00055% of the 34 million trucks registered in the EU. There is therefore no risk of a distortion of the EU haulage market by Moldovan operators. Also, the number of trucks used by EU hauliers in trade with Moldova is now also much higher than before the Agreement, reflecting the increase in EU exports to Moldova.

The Agreement, together with a similar bilateral road transport agreement between the EU and Ukraine, continues to play a role in the Solidarity Lanes, with Moldova being a key partner for the functioning of the Danube corridor, and a transit country for both Ukrainian fuel imports and trade in a wide range of other products, such a chemicals, wood, fuel, cement and other manufactured goods.

Finally, the Agreement continues to contribute to a significant reduction of the burden on the transport industry and the state authorities in both Moldova and the Member States in relation to the administrative formalities linked to issuing permits.

3.2.3. Continuation of the Agreement

The reasons for the extension of the Agreement are threefold.

First, the monitoring of the Agreement has shown that it has provided benefits to the trade of both the EU and Moldova. The increase in road transport services has also been beneficial to road transport operators of both parties to the Agreement. These benefits have been maintained in the period after 2023, when EU hauliers have continued to increase their exports. These positive developments clearly support the prolongation of the Agreement that, although designed in the first place to help the Moldovan economy against the background of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, has also provided benefits to the EU.

Second, it seems that the Agreement, together with a comparable road transport agreement signed with Ukraine, has also eased the export of Ukrainian goods, contributing to the well-functioning of Solidarity Lanes and keeping afloat two economies that the EU wants to support in the short to long term. These aspects should be encouraged and confirmed by the proposed continuation.

Third, the Agreement should also be understood as facilitating the reconstruction of Ukraine in due course, beyond Russia's war of aggression against this country.

– As follows from the above, the continuation of the Agreement until 31 March 2029 is necessary because the conditions justifying the conclusion of the original agreement continue to prevail, and will probably do so for quite some time. The continuing military operations on Moldova's eastern flank, and the associated destruction of transport infrastructure in the related areas, which had been transit areas for Moldova's exports in the past, will remain a limiting factor for the economic development of Moldova in the foreseeable future. Moreover, since the summer of 2026, the renewed intensity of the attacks by Russia over Ukraine has led to the de-facto closure of Black Sea ports. The massive attacks against Ukraine's road and rail border crossing infrastructures with Member States and Moldova are creating increasing security risks on key Solidarity Lanes alternative routes, especially regarding transport by road and rail, and are considerably affecting imports and exports to and from Moldova, making the Agreement even more indispensable for supporting Moldova in its imports and exports of goods.

– The position to be adopted on behalf of the Union should therefore be in accordance with the draft decision of the Joint Committee attached to this proposal.

– This proposal is made together with a proposal for the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine on the Carriage of Freight by Road[7], as regards the continuation of that Agreement. That proposal concerns a prolongation for 24 months of the Agreement with Ukraine, which was signed by the Union on 29 June 2022, and most recently prolonged until 31 March 2027[8].

4. LEGAL BASIS

4.1. Procedural legal basis

The Joint Committee is a body set up by an agreement, namely the Agreement between the European Union and Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road.

The act which the Joint Committee is called upon to adopt will produce legal effects under the Agreement between the European Union and Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road for the Union. The act will be binding for the Union, in accordance with Article 6(5) of the Agreement.

The envisaged act does not supplement or amend the institutional framework of the Agreement.

Therefore, the procedural legal basis for the proposed Council decision is Article 218(9) TFEU.

4.2. Substantive legal basis

The main objective and content of the envisaged act relates to road transport.

Therefore, the substantive legal basis of the proposed decision is Article 91 TFEU.

4.3. Conclusion

The legal basis of the proposed decision should be Article 91 TFEU, in conjunction with Article 218(9) TFEU.

[7] OJ L 179, 6.7.2022, p. 4, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2022/1158/oj.

[8] OJ L, 2025/2352, 21.11.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2352/oj.

5. PUBLICATION OF THE ENVISAGED ACT

As the act of the Joint Committee will prolong the duration of the Agreement, it is appropriate to publish it in the *Official Journal of the European Union* after its adoption.

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 91 in conjunction with Article 218(9) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

(1) The Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road[9] (the 'Agreement') was concluded by the Union by means of Council Decision (EU) 2022/2417[10].

(2) Article 6(1) of the Agreement established a Joint Committee to supervise and monitor the application and implementation of the Agreement. Pursuant to Article 6(2) of the Agreement, the Joint Committee is to be convened at the latest three months before the expiry of the Agreement in order to assess and decide the need for a further continuation of the Agreement.

(3) By means of Decision No 2/2022 of the Joint Committee[11], the duration of the Agreement was extended until 30 June 2024. By means of Decision No 1/2024 of the Joint Committee[12], the Agreement was further extended until 31 December 2025. By Decision No 1/2025 of the Joint Committee[13], the Agreement was again extended, until 31 March 2027.

(4) In order for both the European Union and the Republic of Moldova to continue benefiting from the positive effects of the Agreement, by facilitating road freight

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9 OJ L 181, 7.7.2022, p. 4, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2022/1165/oj.

10 Council Decision (EU) 2022/2417 of 5 December 2022 on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the carriage of freight by road (OJ L 318, 12.12.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2022/2417/oj).

11 Decision No 2/2022 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the carriage of freight by road of 15 December 2022 regarding the continuation of the Agreement (OJ L 79, 17.3.2023, p. 185, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/604/oj).

12 Decision No 1/2024 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the carriage of freight by road of 26 March 2024 as regards the continuation of the Agreement (OJ L, 2024/1266, 30.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/1266/oj).

13 Decision No 1/2025 of the Joint Committee established by the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road of 19 September 2025 as regards the continuation of the Agreement (OJ L, 2025/2252, 25.11.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2252/oj).

transport between and through the Republic of Moldova and the European Union and supporting the well-functioning of the Solidarity Lanes in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Agreement should be extended until 31 March 2029.

(5) Pursuant to Article 6|(2) of the Agreement, the Joint Committee, during its next meeting, is to adopt a decision on the need for a further continuation of the Agreement, including the duration thereof, which will be binding for the Union once it is adopted by the Joint Committee.

(6) That decision will, if adopted, produce legal effects for the Union.

(7) It is therefore necessary to establish the position to be taken in the Joint Committee as regards the continuation of the Agreement. The position should be based on the draft decision of the Joint Committee attached to this decision.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The position to be taken on the Union's behalf within the Joint Committee as regards the continuation of the Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova on the Carriage of Freight by Road shall be based on the draft decision of the Joint Committee attached to this Decision.

Minor technical changes to the draft decision of the Joint Committee may be agreed to by the representatives of the Union within the Joint Committee without a further decision of the Council.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President