

## ForMin Aurescu: Most recent financial aid protocol for Moldova - conditioned on observance of rule of law

**Romania's latest non-reimbursable financial aid protocol for the Republic of Moldova is conditioned on the observance of the rule of law and the European track of the neighboring country, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu, said on Friday.**

The head of the Romanian diplomacy held a press conference, occasioned by the presentation of his activity report after one year in office.

He brought to mind that, at its meeting on Thursday, the Government approved the negotiation and signing of the sixth additional protocol to the agreement on the implementation of the technical and financial assistance programme, based on a non-reimbursable financial aid amounting to 100 million euros, granted by Romania to the Republic of Moldova.

"This agreement, signed in 2010, had to be extended in terms of its applicability and, on this occasion, through Protocol 6, we are also extending the areas in which this grant may be granted, for projects in various fields, such as health infrastructure, education and culture, environment, water and sewerage, supporting the realization of structures and operating procedures in these fields at European standards," said Aurescu.

According to the Minister, the Government's decision to approve the start of negotiations on this additional protocol "is a concrete example of action to support the European path of the Republic of Moldova, which is the only one to ensure the economic and democratic development of the Republic of Moldova, to the benefit of all its citizens."

This agreement proposes the inclusion of political and technical conditionalities that must be met in order to continue accessing Romania's financial support.

"What I mean here is that the Republic of Moldova needs to maintain its European path, while observing the democratic principles and the rule of law, with the special bilateral relationship to be based on the strategic partnership for the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, until the full implementation by the Republic of Moldova of the provisions of the Association Agreement with the European Union, while carrying out the necessary reforms in this regard, with an emphasis on justice reform," said the Romanian high official.

He also talked about the need of "ensuring the conditions for strengthening and protecting Romania's investment presence in the Republic of Moldova, ensuring the sustainability of Romania's investments in the Iasi-Ungheni-Chisinau gas pipeline project, strengthening the language, culture and history community."

At the same time, there are included "measures to ensure the visibility of investments provided by Romania, the distribution of financial aid to all citizens of the Republic of Moldova and the provision of co-financing from the Republic of Moldova."

According to Aurescu, those provisions are "inspired by the experience of the 10 years of operation of this agreement, are in the European spirit and were introduced by the Romanian government to ensure that the financial support we provide will generate lasting benefits for citizens, will support the advancement of European reforms and the observance of democratic principles and the rule of law in the Republic of Moldova."

The Foreign Minister also spoke about the second round of the presidential elections in the Republic of Moldova.

"We are following them very carefully. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has underlined and I reiterate Romania's position, the need for the second round of elections to be conducted in full transparency, in accordance with European and international standards, as well as democratic principles. Romania will continue to pursue all field assessments and will not hesitate to report any shortcomings in the election process," he said.

According to Aurescu, any deviation in this electoral process "will have a detrimental impact on the legitimacy of the elections."