

Speech of Mr. Dirk SCHUEBEL, Ambassador, Head of European Union Delegation to the Republic of Moldova

Joint press-conference with Alexei ROIBU, Minister of Interior and Peter KESSLER, Head of UNHCR Office in the Republic of Moldova

Dear Minister,

Dear colleagues and friends,

I am very pleased to be here today when we can just conclude another important chapter of preparations in the framework of the Visa Dialogue. We are very happy on the recent adoption by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova of the two UN conventions on statelessness, and namely the 1954 UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

I would like to congratulate the Minister and the Ministry of Interior for the leadership role played in this process and to encourage them to assume the same role in the implementation phase. I would also like to thank UNHCR for the role it has played in the preparation phase and the EU High Level Policy Advisor that advises the Ministry of Interior, and namely the Bureau of Migration and Asylum in this important area.

Indeed, the ratification of those instruments is part of the EU – Republic of Moldova Visa Liberalization Action Plan and therefore it is an important step forward from the perspective of our joint Visa Dialogue. It should be stressed that the importance of the ratification goes well beyond the EU - Moldova Action Plan on Visa Liberalization as it touches upon fundamental human rights, in particular the universal right to a nationality.

The Republic of Moldova has already long expressed its commitment to this matter through the ratification of the 1997 European Convention on nationality and the 2006 European Convention on the avoidance of statelessness in relation to state succession. I consider the current ratification process as a continuation of the commitment of the Republic of Moldova to protecting stateless persons and to reduce statelessness on its territory and, all together, as a new step towards the concrete implementation of those international and European standards.

The ratification was accompanied by the drafting of necessary legislative amendments, which demonstrate a commitment towards the concrete implementation of the principles contained in both UN and European Conventions.

We also expect that the Republic of Moldova will not only continue to grant stateless status to all in need through the establishment of a specific procedure of determination of status of stateless by a special unit of the Ministry, such as for instance is the Bureau for Migration and Asylum, but that it will also actively work towards the elimination of statelessness, in accordance with the spirit and the provisions of the 1961 UN Convention.

I would like to acknowledge that ratification and legislative reforms constitute an important first step, however the EU Delegation is fully aware that implementation will require further efforts and institutional development. I would like to assure the Minister that the EU stands ready to assist the Republic of Moldova to achieve this important undertaking.

Finally, let me thank once again the Minister for his leadership taken in this matter, the strong commitment to reforms of the Ministry, in particular since he has taken office, and I look forward to very intense and detailed cooperation in this and many other matters which we are cooperating on a daily basis.

Isabelle Mihoubi-Astor, EU High Level Policy Adviser to the Bureau for Migration and Asylum

Minister, Excellency, dear guests and colleagues,

- I had the honor, privilege and pleasure to work with the Ministry of Internal Affairs during the preparation phase of the ratification process and the subsequent drafting of the amendments to the legislation of the Republic of Moldova and I would like to stress the high level of commitment of the Ministry to this important matter.

- As highlighted by Minister Roibu and Amb. Schuebel, the ratification is good news on two accounts. 1) it is part of the implementation of the Action Plan on EU Visa Liberalization 2) It will support the efforts of Moldova to solve the humanitarian issue which has been pending for several years.

- Particularly impressive is the fact that in parallel to the ratification process of the two statelessness Conventions, the Ministry has already prepared in parallel amendments to the domestic legislation. This clearly demonstrates a commitment to the implementation of these Conventions.

- During the drafting process, the Ministry has been invited by the French authorities to get acquainted with their procedures of determination of the status of stateless persons, they also received extensive support from UNHCR and visited the procedure in Hungary.

- Today, it can be said that the legislation of Moldova constitute a model for the region and beyond.

- When we talk about implementation of the Conventions on statelessness, we talk about a concrete improvement on the lives of real persons, we talk about the possibility for thousands of persons who have been living for long years on the territory of Moldova to finally regularize their status.

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and its subordinated organ the Bureau for Migration and Asylum are currently working on a multi-faceted strategy to implement the new legislation. This strategy will involve inter alia the establishment of a unit to determine the status of stateless persons, the training to the staff, the conduct of a public information strategy in order to make people of Moldova aware of their rights. This process, under the leadership of Minister Roibu and implemented by the BMA, will require continued assistance and support from all concerned.

- Once again, I would like to congratulate Minister Roibu and his staff for this achievement and assure him of our continued support.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION