

10 December 2010

**For the attention of the Editorial Office of Euractiv.com**

**Regarding the content of the article:**

*France blocks Romania, Bulgaria's Schengen bids*, published on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2010

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Regarding France's new position towards Romania's accession to the Schengen Area, we would like to bring the following facts to your attention:

1. Romania recognises the border with Republic of Moldova as it was inherited from the USSR. The Treaty for managing the border (as it is correctly named) recently signed between Romania and Republic of Moldova does not change the present juridical situation but brings further measures for better management of the common border. The treaty was the result of a requirement from the Moldovan government, even if it was later criticised by the Moldovan president on procedural grounds. However, President Ghimpu retracted his declarations and the treaty is expected to be ratified. The infightings in the Republic of Moldova do not involve Romania and do not change the fact that Romania recognised the border. By signing the treaty for managing the border, Romania just reconfirmed its position. To speak of a `border dispute` between Romania and Republic of Moldova, as the French government did according to Euractiv, is outrageous.
2. The existence of a Treaty between Republic of Moldova and Romania was not a precondition for the Schengen accession. The connection between the aforementioned Treaty and the Schengen accession was only made as a new pretext for demanding "new tasks" from Romania.
3. Romania publicly supported Moldova's EU accession ambitions and its actions were always related to the same objective: to bring Republic of Moldova closer to the EU. One

cannot deny that this is a legitimate objective for two countries sharing deep historical links. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Bucharest has subversive plans towards the Republic of Moldova. As so, we consider the hysterical behavior of the French authorities as being shameful.

4. Upon Romania's initiative, a group of EU Member States was set up to support Moldova's European aspirations - initially called Friends of Moldova group, currently `Group for the European Action of the Republic of Moldova`. One may be surprised to find out that France is a founding member of this group. However, Paris has radically changed its position in the last months and obstructed discussions to grant Republic of Moldova a visa liberalization perspective in the Council, severely undermining the efforts of the pro-EU government coalition in Moldova.
5. Without any legal grounds, France has gone a step further and linked Romania's accession to the Schengen Area to the Republic of Moldova. This offensive attitude comes in the context in which Paris already linked Romania's accession to the issue of Roma integration, making Bucharest pay for the reckless anti-Roma measures of the French authorities.
6. The British and French media wrote that Romania is giving EU citizenship to millions of Moldovans. This is simply false. This year the authorities granted Romanian citizenship to less than 70.000 Moldovans (which is anyway less than the number of citizenships granted by France to non-EU immigrants). One cannot simply ignore the fact that we are speaking about families in the Republic of Moldova that lost their rights after USSR's occupation here. Romania does not automatically grant its citizenship to Moldovans. In fact, we could say that this procedure is rather restrictive, the decision being made on strong individual grounds - and only for those proving their belonging to a family having Romanian citizenship before 1944.

Our think tank was and still is critical towards Romanian authorities (including concerning the Schengen accession criteria, as Euractiv correctly reported [here](#)), but France and the other EU member states should notice the difference between real shortcomings and pure speculation.

Sincerely yours,

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