

## FOREWORD

The European Institute of Romania has developed a project during 2011, on “*Preparing Moldova for a comprehensive free trade area with the European Union*”. The project was financed by the German Marshall Fund, USA, through the Black Sea Trust Programme and was performed in partnership with the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives – IDIS “Viitorul” from the Republic of Moldova. The project was aimed at offering support to the Moldovan authorities who were directly involved in the negotiation process for signing a new free trade agreement with the European Union.

Some of the objectives of the project were the following: the implementation of a training course (in Chişinău) for civil servants working for the Moldovan central public administration, on issues related to commercial aspects of the European Union, **a study concerning the consequences of a deep and comprehensive free trade area on the economy of the Republic of Moldova**, as well as the stimulation of dialogue, the creation of a cooperation environment and ensuring the optimum transfer of knowledge by organizing a debate in Chişinău concerning the free trade issue in EU.

Apart from evaluating the trade relations between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, the current study has set out to analyze the institutional background concerning the creation of a deep and comprehensive free trade area, to identify the vulnerable sectors/ fields, as well as those potentially profitable and competitive for the Republic of Moldova, in relation to the EU market. Estimating the effects of such a free trade area on agricultural producers and on certain industrial sectors from the Republic of Moldova represents also one of the goals of this study. Last but not least, the research sought to formulate specific recommendations for the political executives, concerning the measures and the action strategy to adopt on a medium term for the sectors which have a competitive advantage for the Republic of Moldova.

The study has benefited from an extremely valuable contribution of a specialists’ team, which will be presented as follows:

**Ciprian Ciucu, the coordinator of the study**, is an associate lecturer at the University of Bucharest, where he is teaching a course on Project Management, as part of the Department for European Studies, a branch of the Faculty of Letters. He has a vast experience in the non-profit sector, where he has worked for several well-known organizations, such as “The Foundation for the Development of Civil Society”, or “The Education 2000+ Center”. As from the year 2009, he is a founding member and Programme Director of the Romanian Center for European Policies. Throughout his career, he has provided consulting services and has conducted studies as part of several technical assistance projects (financed by Phare, or under the aegis of UNICEF, World Bank) for various agencies and ministries. Mr. Ciucu has also written for the Romanian press, in printed or online publications such as: The Cultural Observer (newspaper section, 2005-2009), Cotidianul (section 2007), Dilema Veche, HotNews, Euractiv etc.

**Viorel Chivrigă** is the Director of the Department for Functional Market Economy, which is part of the IDIS “Viitorul” organization in Chişinău. He is also Co- Chairman of the Coalition for Rural Economic Development (CRED), secretary of the Civic Council, which is part of the Customs Service and member of the Ministry of Economy Consultative Council. In 1987, he graduated the Agrarian University of the Republic of Moldova and in 1991 he obtained his PhD within the same institution. Between 1991 and 1993, he attended post-graduate courses at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest, Romania. He also holds an MA in Management. Starting from 1997, he has been a member of the IDIS “Viitorul” organization. His key qualifications include: business management, economic policies, international and internal trade, investments and agriculture. Mr. Chivrigă has written comments and has produced economic and legal analysis for the following publications of the Republic of Moldova: “BusinessClass”, “Businessul Agricol”, “Timpul”, “ECO”, “Jurnal de Chişinău”, “Logos Press”, “Fermierul”, “Vocea Poporului”, “Новое Время”, “Analytique”, “Flux”, “Ziarul de Gardă”, “Adevărul”, “Кишиневский обозреватель”, “Комсомольская Правда”, “Capital Market”, and “Agroinform”.

**Alexandra Toderiță** is a researcher within the Romanian Center for European Policies in Bucharest. In 2010 she graduated the Master in Advanced European and International Studies at the “Institut Européen des Hautes Etudes Internationales” in Nice, the trilingual programme. She previously worked as research analyst on the European energy sector and was an active member of various NGOs. Ms. Toderiță majored in both Finance and Banking, at the Academy of Economic Studies, and in Communication and Public Relations, at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. Her areas of interest include European integration and regional cooperation, social economy.

**Ion Tornea** graduated the Academy of Economic Studies in Chişinău and got his Master degree in Business Administration and Economics at Stockholm University. Prior to becoming an economic expert at IDIS “Viitorul”, he worked as a loan-expert in the banking field in the Republic of Moldova and as a consultant in the Agribusiness Development Project, implemented by CNFA Inc. and financed by the US Agency for International Development, USAID. He published studies as author and co-author, both within IDIS “Viitorul and in CNFA Inc.

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Finally, I would like to thank the authors for the scientific quality of their work and also for their pragmatic approach towards the main research pillars, proven throughout the elaboration of this study. I would also like to express my gratitude to the team from the European Institute of Romania who ensured the guidance of this project, for their effort and dedication aimed at the smooth development of the project and at the successful achievement of all the required activities: Mrs. Cornelia Predoiu - initiator of the project and coordinator of the training component, Ms. Oana Mocanu - coordinator

of the research module of the project, Ms. Alina Arhire - communication executive. Last but not least, I would like to thank the funding body, the representatives of the German Marshall Fund in Romania, especially Mr. Mark Cunningham, project coordinator.

This study will be presented at the end of September this year in Chişinău, as part of a workshop aimed at consolidating the debate framework on the issues of free trade between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union, as well as on the bilateral relation between Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

I sincerely hope that the results of this study will contribute to the optimization of the efforts invested by the Republic of Moldova in negotiating a deep and comprehensive free trade area with the European Union, while keeping the adaptation and legal harmonization costs at a minimum level.

**Gabriela Drăgan**

**Director General of the European Institute of Romania**