

Moldova Weekly – December 9 – Report on the current situation in Moldova

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) is a Brussels-based organization active in the field of democracy assistance which has Moldova as one of the target countries. Using our partner organizations in Moldova we try to bring current information from established international and Moldovan news agencies in order to provide an independent view on Moldova to the Brussels decision makers. Please address any questions or comments to kristinaprunerova@eupd.eu.

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FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT

OSCE Ministerial Council's meeting concludes in Athens, Declaration on Moldova not adopted

The Athens meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council has concluded after adopting a string of decisions and declarations concerning the deepening and enlivenment of cooperation between the OSCE member states in order to cope with the existing risks to security in the European-Atlantic and Eurasian areas. Important in this respect is the Ministerial Declaration on the Corfu Process within the OSCE, which points out the main sectors of activity to combat new and traditional threats to security. The Ministerial Council repeatedly failed to adopt the Final Political Declaration as well as the regional Declaration on Moldova. In his closing speech, Foreign and European Integration Minister Iurie Leanca backed the position of other delegations and expressed disappointment about the fact that despite consistent efforts by the Moldovan delegation and other involved actors, the organization failed again to reach a consensus on these important documents. At the same time, 27 member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization came out with a statement reiterating their position that the Adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe will be ratified only if all commitments seen in the Final Act to the CFE Treaty from 1999 and annexes to it are fulfilled. Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and other countries subscribed to the statement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. During the ministerial meeting, a group of OSCE member states spread a declaration on the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Europe's reunification, with Moldova aligning to it. *Moldpres*, 3 December 2009

Foreign support for Moldova's budget in 2010

Among the major foreign providers of grants to support the budget next year will be the European Commission - €81 million, the Government of the Netherlands – €3.5 million, and the British Government – €1 million. The World Bank will

allocate about US\$33 million for projects financed from foreign resources, while the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – US\$7.8 million. The draft budget law for 2010 approved by the Government provided for total grants of 2.67 billion lei. The internal grants amount to 18 million lei. The foreign grants this year are projected to total over 2 billion lei, which is 3.2% of the GDP. The value of the grants is over two times higher than a year before. Minister of Finance Veaceslav Negruta said the grants for supporting the budget will be 1.53 billion lei (€88.5 million), while those for implementing projects financed from foreign resources – 517 million lei (US\$41 million). *IPN, 7 December 2009*

Poland to provide US\$15 million loan to Moldova

The Government decided to open negotiations on the draft lending agreement between the Government of Moldova and the Government of Poland under which Poland will provide a US\$15 million loan to Moldova. Minister of Finance Veaceslav Negruta said this money will be used to cover the budget deficit. The loan will be repaid within a year but, under the agreement, the debtor can ask the creditor to extend the repayment term. The interest will be agreed during the negotiations, but it will be lower than 3-4%. The penalty will be 2%. The loan will be disbursed during three months of the coming into force of the agreement. The negotiations are set to start this month. *IPN, 9 December 2009*

MOLDOVA POLITICS

PSD merges with PDM

Marian Lupu, the leader of the Democratic Party of Moldova, and Iurie Bolboceanu, the president of the National Council of the Social-Democratic Party, signed a memorandum to initiate the merger of the two parties on Friday evening. Under the document, the PSD will be absorbed into the PDM, which will take over its rights and obligations. Marian Lupu said the merger is aimed at strengthening the center-left and Social-Democratic forces in Moldova. Dumitru Braghis, the president of the Social-Democratic Party, did not attend the ceremony where the memorandum was signed. Iurie Bolboceanu said the leader of the PSD has a different position as regards the party's prospects. The memorandum was signed several hours after the presidential candidate Marian Lupu had a meeting with the Communist leader Vladimir Voronin. Asked to say what subjects they discussed at the meeting and what agreements they reached, the PDM president stated he cannot say that certain results were achieved, but added that he is ready to continue the discussions with Vladimir Voronin. *IPN, 4 December 2009*

Constitutional reform commission sets up working group at first meeting

The members of the constitutional reform commission at the first meeting on 4 December created a working group that will formulate proposals. The working group is composed of 14 people. It is headed by the constitutional expert Victor Popa. The chairman of the Parliament's legal commission Ion Creanga was named secretary of the working group. Among other members are constitutional law experts and scientists. Moldova's Acting President Mihai Ghimpu, who is the head of the commission, said they aim to modify a number of articles from the Constitution. 'The Constitution is mostly acceptable, only certain articles must be adjusted,' he said. Mihai Ghimpu signed a decree to set up the constitutional reform commission earlier this week. The commission will identify the shortcomings of the Constitution and formulate proposals for improving it. The procedure for electing the head of state there will be modified. *IPN, 4 December 2009*

ELECTIONS

Most Moldovans against early elections, for direct election of head of state

About 56% of the Moldovans do not want early elections as they distract attention from the problems that must be dealt with immediately, says a national survey conducted by IDIS Viitorul. According to the poll, if a referendum on the modification of the Constitution was held, 74% of those polled would vote in favor of directly electing the head of state. The survey titled 'Spirits and Predictable Trends in Moldova' reveals a real storm of popular approval ratings on the political arena, said Igor Munteanu, the executive director of IDIS 'Viitorul'. Marian Lupu has a rating of 16.3%, the former President Vladimir Voronin – of 15.8%, Prime Minister Vlad Filat – of 7.6%, Mayor of Chisinau Dorin Chirtoaca – of 4.9%,

Head of Parliament Mihai Ghimpu – of 2.1%. If parliamentary elections were held next Sunday, the PCRM would poll 33%, the PDM – 14%, the PLDM – 11%, the PL – 10%, while AMN – 2%. About 11% of the respondents would not take part in elections, while the other 19% have not yet decided who to vote for. Thus, the parties that formed the Alliance for European Integration, except the AMN, would win about 35%, while the PRCM – 33%. The survey also shows that if direct presidential elections were held, 32% of the respondents would vote for the Alliance's candidate, Marian Lupu. 62% of those polled expressed their dissatisfaction with their living conditions - about 32% said their situation was bad, while 40% - said their situation was normal. The Communist sympathizers are the most concerned about their situation (39%). The survey was carried out by the Center for Sociological Investigations and Marketing CBS AXA in partnership with IDIS Viitorul between 2 and 11 November. It covered a sample of 1,085 persons from 67 settlements. *IPN, 2 December 2009*

Moldovan parliament fails to elect president

The second attempt to elect Moldova's parliament failed today as the opposition Communists boycotted the ballot. According to the report by the parliamentary commission in charge of holding the presidential election, the candidate of the ruling alliance for the office of head of state, Marian Lupu, received 53 votes out of the 61 necessary. Parliament Speaker Mihai Ghimpu said that the ruling alliance should meet citizens' will of having a president and added that the alliance committed that Lupu would become president. *Moldpres, 7 December 2009*

New early elections to be organized in 2010

New early elections will be organized in Moldova in 2010, most probably in the autumn, following the non-election of the President of Moldova. On 7 December, the MPs made the last attempt to elect the head of state. The parliamentary group of the PCRM, which consists of 48 MPs, boycotted the vote, refusing to enter the polling booth. The decision not to take part in elections was made by the PCRM's Central Committee in the morning of 7 December. The MPs of the four parties that formed the Alliance – the PLDM, PL, PDM and AMN – called on the PCRM to vote so as to bring the political crisis to an end. Immediately after the 53 MPs voted, Marian Lupu said that early elections would be held. According to him, the Constitution would be modified in the near future. The president of honor of the PDM Dumitru Diacov said he was dissatisfied with the fact that the Communist MPs did not vote. 'The situation has changed overnight. They said they would vote, but changed up their minds in the morning,' Diacov said, adding that the PCRM is actually led by Mark Tkachuk, who already made the list of 'possible traitors' of the PCRM. Diacov also said that such a step would lead to the destruction of the PCRM, while the PDM will win the early elections as Moldova does not have any prospects when there are two radical forces. He added that the PDM will participate in elections separately. The other leaders of the Alliance said it was too early to say how they will run in elections next year. Communist MP Iurie Muntean said the PCRM has only one party leader and it is now united more than ever. Prime Minister Vlad Filat said the Government did not plan money for early elections in the draft budget law for 2010, but the necessary modifications will be made. Speaker of Parliament Mihai Ghimpu said Marian Lupu will be anyway elected head of state by the present Parliament, after a referendum is held to modify the Constitution. However, political analyst Igor Botan said that now the second attempt to elect the President failed, there are constitutional grounds for dissolving the Parliament. Under the legislation, the legislative body can be dissolved once a year, i.e after July 16. *IPN, 7 December 2009*