

Moldova Weekly – October 1 – Report on the current situation in Moldova in the weeks after the preliminary elections held on 29 July

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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MOLDOVA POLITICS

Filat Government constituted

The Parliament gave a vote of confidence to the executive's government program entitled 'European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Welfare' and approved the candidates for Cabinet members. The new executive was constituted by the vote of the 53 MPs of the Alliance for European Integration. The parliamentary group of the PCRM abstained from voting. The government program presented by the Prime Minister elect Vlad Filat centers on five major objectives: Moldova's Europeanization, the country's reunification, establishment of the rule of law, overcoming the financial and economic crisis and assurance of economic growth, and decentralization of the power and guaranteeing of local autonomy. 'We will not be a technical government. The word 'order' will mean responsibility for the people's fate. We will build a united society where all the people will be involved in the achievement of the set objectives,' Filat said from the rostrum of the Parliament. 'The country's reunification for us is a major goal. We want the Transnistrian conflict to be solved peacefully, exclusively in the 5+2 negotiating format,' Vlad Filat said. In his speech that lasted for about 45 minutes, Vlad Filat said that they aim to improve Moldova's relations with neighboring countries and will make considerable effort to improve crossborder cooperation. 'The Government will continue the measures to lift the visa regime for Romanian travelers imposed abusively, which were initiated by the Acting President Mihai Ghimpu,' Filat said, stressing that a framework convention on small-scale border traffic and basic treaty with Romania will be signed. Vlad Filat addressed the members of the Opposition, saying that their rights will be respected. Vlad Filat, 40, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM), was elected as Prime Minister by majority vote. IPN, 25 September 2009

Communists criticize new Government program

The Communist Member of Parliament, Igor Dodon, former deputy Prime Minister of Economy and Trade, presented in the Parliament a speech on behalf of communist faction regarding the new Government activity, in which he criticized the lack of an anti-crisis plan. Dodon declared that, in some chapters, Filat's Government's program 'resembles greatly the Greceanai Government program submitted and approved in spring 2009'. The ex-deputy-Prime Minister said that the Alliance for European Integration did not take into consideration the

communists' proposals not to admit the growth of retirement census and ensure the growth of salaries and pensions. In his speech, Igor Dodon declared that the communist governing system had ensured stability in the last few years. It had stimulated the GDP growth and the growth of investments, decreased external debts and the absolute poverty rate in Republic of Moldova. Deca-press, 25 September 2009

Journalists seek modification of Broadcasting Code

'No progress can be made unless the Broadcasting Code is modified. One of the first changes that must be made is to empower the Supervisory Board of Teleradio-Moldova to elect the radio and television directors so as to quicker remedy the situation,' member of the Board Igor Munteanu said at the Press Club's meeting organized by the Independent Journalism Center in Chisinau. The participants in the meeting, among whom representatives of broadcasting institutions, members of the Broadcasting Coordination Council and of the Electronic Press Association, journalists from Chisinau, Tiraspol and Comrat, stressed the necessity of introducing essential amendments to the Broadcasting Code so that it guarantees freedoms. They said that the present Code cannot ensure the implementation of reforms in broadcasting. According to Munteanu, the Supervisory Board should be constituted in a different way. 'The candidates must be fielded by professional associations, examined by a specialized commission and then confirmed by Parliament,' he said. Munteanu expressed his regret at the fact that a political and European socialization institution had disappeared gradually during the last two decades. Mircea Surdu, journalist of Moldova 1 TV channel, voiced hope that the members of the new government will be more cooperative and things will improve. IPN, 25 September 2009

Government action programme focuses on EU integration, economic growth

The action programme of the new government led by Vlad Filat is entitled, 'European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Welfare'. The parliament's majority coalition approved the programme and gave a vote of confidence to the Cabinet of Ministers on Friday. The programme's basic priorities are: to ensure Moldova's Europeanization, reintegration and the supremacy of law; overcome the economic and financial crisis and secure economic growth; decentralize power and ensure local autonomy. The new cabinet is not set to be a technical one, but a government with a four-year mandate which, along with the Alliance for European Integration (AIE), assumes all the responsibility for the future government. The new government commits to cease economic decline by ensuring economic growth, to improve living standards, guarantee the independence of justice and observe the human rights, media freedom, etc. The new government advocates a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in the 5+2 format, within the limits of Moldova's Constitution and on the basis of international standards and by replacing the peacekeeping forces with a civil international mission. The Cabinet of Ministers, led by Filat, is to resume negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions and donor countries. The Filat government intends to disassemble the 'vertical powers', and implement European principles in the public administration. The new executive also plans to reform the judicial system and the Prosecutor General's Office. The Teleradio-Moldova national public broadcasting institution is to be reformed as well. As for the foreign policy, the government wants to sign an agreement on association with the EU, which would imply the liberalization of the visa regime. The government will promote good-neighborly relations with Romania and Ukraine and edifying strategic partnership with Russia and the USA. The new governmental team is also set to create new jobs, cut unemployment, modernize the agricultural sector, reform the wage payment system in the public sector, etc. The MPs of the Party of Communists (PCRM) doubted the viability of the government's programme. They showed concern about the security of the principle of Moldova's neutrality, privatisation of some state enterprises. They reproached the government for the lack of representatives of national minorities in the new government, and gender equality is not observed. Moldpres, 25 September 2009

Government works out plan of anti-crisis measures

The new Cabinet is devising a plan of anti-crisis measures aimed at stopping the decline and improving the situation in the sectors of the national economy. At the first meeting of the Government, Prime Minister Vlad Filat set out a number of immediate objectives, the terms for achieving them and named the responsible ministries. Between 26 and 29 September, the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Finance will analyze the deepness of the social-economic crisis and will coordinate the sectoral consultations on the anti-crisis measures at every ministry. Afterward, the ministers will hold consultations with the relevant social partners and formulate anti-crisis plans of action for the sectors for which they are responsible. These consultations will take place during 29 September – 13 October. Donors' policy notes will serve as support for the plan of anti-crisis measures that will be made public at a news conference on 1 October. Representatives of the foreign donors – the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the European Commission and others – will be invited to the conference. An IMF mission will work in Chisinau between 13 and 20 October at the invitation of the Prime Minister. The official negotiations with the IMF will start then. The macroeconomic situation and the Government's plan of anti-crisis measures will be discussed at a meeting of the Premier and the IMF mission on 19 October. According to Vlad

Filat, it is very important that the IMF presents its assessments of the macroeconomic situation. The Government hopes to make public the new program of cooperation with the IMG on 28 or 29 October. IPN, 26 September 2009

Parliament names new SIS head

Artur Reshetnikov was dismissed from the post of head of the Security and Information Service (SIS) of Moldova by a majority vote of the Parliament. By a Parliament decision, he was replaced by the former SIS employee Gheorghe Mihai. The members of the governing coalition argued that, while holding the post of SIS head, especially during the electoral campaigns, Artur Reshetnikov made public accusations against a number of people without respecting the principle of presumption of innocence. 'By his behavior, the SIS head violated the deontological norms and the norms and principles enumerated in the Law on the Security and Information Service,' the Parliament decisions says. Gheorghe Mihai was proposed for SIS head by Moldova's Caretaker President Mihai Ghimpu. Gheorghe Mihai, 59, is married and has two children. From 1989 until 2007, he had occupied different positions at the SIS. Since December 2007, he had been held in reserve. IPN, 25 September 2009

FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT

USA to provide Moldova with 262 million dollars

The USA will provide Moldova with a 262-million-dollar grant within the Country Preliminary Plan through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Half of the sum will be used to restore roads, and the rest to develop the farming sector and buy irrigation systems. Prime Minister Vladimir Filat told that the negotiations on the grant have just begun. The money is likely to reach Moldova in late 2009, i.e. after all the procedures are completed, including the signing of a final agreement to this effect. Filat stressed that the agreement's implementation will start immediately after it is signed. The roads due to be repaired on the basis of the received assistance are to be subsequently established, the prime minister specified. U.S. Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to Moldova Asif J. Chaudhry told the same briefing that over the last nine months, 11-million-dollars-worth of feasibility surveys necessary to implement the agreement which is to be signed have already been carried out. The ambassador emphasized that the USA will further provide Moldova with assistance. The Millennium Challenge programme was launched by the U.S. Congress in 2004 following an initiative by President George W. Bush. The programme provides for financial assistance in non-refundable investments for economic development to low-income states. Moldpres, 28 September 2009

World Bank ready to help Moldova overcome economic crisis

World Bank Country Manager Melanie Marlett said that the WB decided to provide immediate assistance to Moldova for overcoming the economic crisis. The announcement was made at a meeting of the WB official and Moldova's Acting President and Head of Parliament Mihai Ghimpu. Melanie Marlett informed the caretaker head of state of the WB's firm intention to negotiate with the new Government of Moldova and participate together with the IMF and foreign donors in the formulation and implementation of the National Plan of Anti-Crisis Measures. After the plan is devised and a new cooperation program with the IMF is approved, representatives of the Government will have a meeting with the Consultative Group in Brussels, which will be attended by Moldova's foreign donors. According to the WB representative, in order to attract more foreign investment and support from donors, the donors should know how deep the crisis in Moldova is. Mihai Ghimpu reasserted the new Moldovan government's intention to implement economic and democratic reforms so as to make progress on the path to European integration. 'We are aware of the fact that the new Government faces the difficult task of implementing unpopular reforms that should have been carried out long ago. But these reforms will help us solve many problems in the future,' Ghimpu said. Since Moldova joined the World Bank in 1992, WB assistance to Moldova totaled US\$775 million for 58 projects. Twenty-nine projects to the value of US\$270 million are now under implementation. The WB Board of Directors adopted a new strategy for Moldova for 2009-2012 on 29 January 2009.