

Moldova Weekly – August 26 – Report on the current situation in Moldova in the weeks after the preliminary elections held on 29 July

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MOLDOVA POLITICS

PCRM MP Turcan: PCRM wants at least one of senior state posts

The MP on behalf of the Communists Party (PCRM) Vladimir Turcan, the former first deputy speaker of Parliament, has told that a consensus with the Alliance for European Integration can be reached only by talks. The PCRM wants at least one of the three senior state positions: head of state, speaker or prime minister. “Over 700,000 people voted for the PCRM. We are morally entitled to one of the senior posts,” Vladimir Turcan said. “We could find the right solutions only by negotiation. The dialogue can take place in a restaurant or at a roundtable meeting. It is a kind of pun,” Turcan said, referring to the coalition leaders’ statements that there will be no talks with the PCRM, only dialogue. “The negotiating process will be difficult because not all the politicians are mature and responsible,” Vladimir Turcan said. “We want to meet face to face, not discuss at a distance. We should overcome the ambitions and not forget that the people voted for the parties and they expect decisions.” The PCRM insists that the head of state should be an apolitical person that will not be the hostage of a political party. Asked how long they will be waiting for the meeting with the Alliance for European Integration, Turcan said that as long as it is needed. “I think that the four parties have not yet finished the talks between them and have not reached a consensus. We will be waiting. In a normal society, when a dialogue is to start, we should not argue until the last day,” the MP said. The Central Committee of the PCRM will hold a meeting this week. Turcan confirmed this, but refused to give details, saying he is not a member of the party. IPN, 18 August 2009

AEI refuses to accept any conditions of Communists

The ruling Alliance for European Integration, which consists of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM), the Liberal Party of Moldova, the Democratic Party of Moldova and the Moldova Noastra Alliance, does not accept any conditions put forward by Communists. The leaders of the above parties declared this on the PRO-TV-Chișinău channel. They remarked that the new President must be a politician and that no important post in the state must be given to the Communists. PLDM Leader Vladimir Filat explained this by the fact that the coalition has a clear majority (53 out of 101 mandates). "We undertake responsibility for the governance, including occupying the key posts in the state - the President, the Premier, the Parliament Chairman, members of the Cabinet of Ministers", he remarked. Leader of the Liberal Party of Moldova Mihai Ghimpu said that the granting of any important state post to the Communists would signify a wide coalition and the Liberals cannot agree upon this. Leader of the Moldova Noastra Alliance Serafim Urechean designated the Communist Party's proposal that an independent candidate must be the President, as unsubstantiated. Urechean believes that the Communist MPs should manifest character and responsibility and vote for the presidential candidate who will be put forward by the new power.

Expert: New head of state could find new premier already appointed

The difficulty of electing the new president creates the risk of a powerful long-lasting crisis and erodes the democratic institutions. Most probably, the new prime minister of Moldova will be named by the current head of state, not by the new one, independent expert Vitali Catana stated. "As a rule, the new head of state should attend the investiture of the new government. But things are complicated by the constitutional provision which says that the president is elected by 3/5 of the votes. This provision has serious effects and should be eliminated. It finds no support in the principles that lay at the basis of the constitutional regime and in the political reality in Moldova," the expert said. The present government became an interim government immediately after the Constitutional Court validated the 20 July legislative elections and the seats of MP. The interim government will work until the new government is invested. Meanwhile, the cabinet will only administer the public affairs, but will not make decisions and will not issue ordinances, Catana specified.

The head of state will nominate the candidate for prime minister after consulting all the parliamentary groups. Within 15 days of the nomination, the candidate will have to ask MPs for a vote of confidence on the government program and the composition of the cabinet. If a candidate is not appointed, the parliamentary groups can field a new candidate. "If the MPs do not give a vote of confidence to a candidate within 45 days of the first nomination, the parliament can be dissolved after two candidates are rejected," Catana said. "Voronin should accept a candidate proposed by the government coalition, especially because he does not form part of the majority in the current legislature anymore," Catana said. The expert said that the outgoing president can use his influence to cause problems and contribute to the prolonging of the political crisis in Moldova. If the head of state does not accept the candidate for premier put forward by the coalition, there could be held new early elections, but not sooner than February 2010. The prime minister is elected by a majority vote. IPN, 20 August 2009

Voronin did not come to dialogue

The AEI leaders waited in vain for Vladimir Voronin at a meeting on Tuesday. The Communist leader did not even show up after an hour at the Palace of the Republic, where the dialogue was set to take place starting at 11.00. Vlad Filat, Mihai Ghimpu, Marian Lupu and Serafim Urecheanu said the AEI sticks to its position, which is considered the only viable one for overcoming the political crisis. They reiterated they will not hold discussions

with PCRМ separately. The AEI will take decisions on the basis of the subsequent actions, after it finds out why the Communists refused to participate in the dialogue. IPN, 25 August 2009

AEI leaders and members believe PCRМ is playing a dangerous game

The Communists Party (PCRМ) rejected the invitation to dialogue of the Alliance for European Integration (AEI) and announced it will open talks to form an anti-crisis left-wing coalition. During a special program on the radio station "Vocea Basarabiei", leaders and members of the AEI resolutely said they would not form a coalition with the PCRМ. The Communists said they will not discuss with the Alliance, but with parties separately. "Our aim is to hold a dialogue with the forces that want to join a patriotic coalition," the Communist leader Vladimir Voronin said at the PCRМ's plenary meeting on Saturday. According to Voronin, the AEI members stick together because the Western countries promised them quick financial assistance. He also said that the Western forces aim to deteriorate the Moldovan-Russian relations and to transform Moldova into the second Georgia and deprive it of neutrality.

"This statement amuses me. The PCRМ and Voronin out of touch with reality. They got stuck in space and do not realize what's happening," said Vlad Filat, the president of PLDM. "Their statements show that they don't know what to do," Filat said, adding that the separate discussions planned by the Communists are a trap. "It is absurd and insulting. We invited them to dialogue and will continue our work. On 28 August, we will constitute the administrative bodies of the Parliament as we have the necessary number of votes. The Communists were elected democratically, but now that the people voted otherwise they should leave. We will probably have to help them," Filat stressed. According to Marian Lupu, the leader of PDM, the statement of PCRМ's Central Committee is "defiance of a civilized, European-like political dialogue and represents disrespect for the other parties." "The AEI does not need to be recognized. It is an accomplished fact. The PCRМ's statement represents a regression as it is hostile and blocks a political dialogue aimed at identifying solutions for overcoming the political crisis and avoiding early elections. Two scenarios are possible: 1. They could take steps to discourage the members of the AEI, but they will not succeed in this, and 2. The PCRМ might provoke early elections and deepen the crisis in Moldova. The Alliance is oriented towards a political dialogue that would help solve the problems," Lupu said. Igor Klipii, of the PDM, expressed his concern about a possible coup planned by the PCRМ.

"The responsibility is borne by Voronin, who lost contact with his own people and plays a dangerous game", adding: "If separate discussions are accepted, the Alliance will die. It will be illogical to accept a dialogue with the party that brought the country to a disaster. The militia general grew older and does not want to admit defeat. Oleg Serebrian, MP of the PDM, said: "It is a worrying message – the PCRМ will provoke early elections and will blame the AEI. It looks like a coup – the Communists started to defy the laws. They try to pave the way by themselves in order to obtain at least four votes in order to have a majority. They will exert pressure. Separate discussions must be excluded." Leonid Bujor, MP of the AMN said: "It is an irresponsible statement aimed at making the situation tenser. The Communists hope to win the early elections. If they insist on discussing with the Democratic parties separately, they will lose the early elections."

"The Communists are ready to resort to illegal schemes, to a coup so that Voronin remained in power at any cost," said Alexandru Tanase, first vice president of the PLDM. "The PCRМ resorted to a scheme to destabilize the situation, which will culminate with early elections. But these elections will remove this party from the political arena. The dismemberment of the PCRМ has already started. There is great tension inside it. No member of the AEI will accept to hold direct talks with the PCRМ, which will have to give way. The new majority is the result of the people's vote and nobody can oppose this," Tanase said. Anatol Salaru, vice president of PL, said that

everything results from Voronin's wish to remain in power, to hold another senior state post. "He is ready to sacrifice his own party. He doesn't care about the serious crisis and the disaster that struck Moldova. If he wants early elections he will have them. We will open 200-300 polling stations abroad and if the one million Moldovans who are abroad vote, the Communists will not obtain even 10 seats. They walked into their own trap – they spoke about stability, but now destabilize the situation. I think there are rational persons among the Communists who will vote for the candidate for the presidency proposed by the AEI. The statement is a weak attempt to encourage the Communists and their electorate. They are morally depressed and are afraid of being imprisoned," Salaru said. The Alliance for European Integration holds 53 seats out of 101. It needs eight more votes to elect the head of state. If it fails, the legislature will be dissolved and new early elections will be held in 2010. IPN, 24 August 2009

PCRM may vote for Lupu if proposed for head of state by left-wing coalition

The Communists Party formulated its offer for the formation of a left-wing coalition and the principles according to which they could vote for a head of state at a closed-door meeting on Monday, Free Romania informs on its website, quoting Newsin. The Communists decided they will only vote for the PDM Marian Lupu if he is fielded for the post of head of state by a wide left-wing coalition, not by the democratic coalition "Alliance for European Integration (AEI)." "Even if the Pope of Rome asks us, we will not accept him as a candidate of the minor Liberal parties in the Parliament," the Communists said, suggesting they will under no circumstances accept the West's requests to support Lupu. The left-wing coalition is supposed to include the PCRM and the PDM and left-wing parties that are outside the Parliament. "Lupu will thus be a quasinational candidate and could become president." Afterward, the posts in the Government would be distributed by talks, but the Communists are ready to offer the PDM more positions than they could obtain as part of the Liberal-Democratic coalition," reads Newsin. The idea of a left-wing coalition was made known at the PCRM's plenary meeting on 22 August. The Communist MPs denied the existence of the AEI as a coalition capable of taking Moldova out of the political crisis. The party's leader Vladimir Voronin said that the AEI members stick together because the Western countries promised them quick financial assistance. The PLDM, PL, PDM and AMN have together 53 of the 101 seats of MP. They invited the PCRM to a dialogue set to take place on Tuesday, starting at 11.00. IPN, 24 August 2009

PCRM calls on parliamentary parties to participate in dialogue separately

The PCRM says the holding of a dialogue with a political organization that exists only in the imagination of certain media outlets is impossible. No subject for discussion, no aim and no partner that would plead from a common position can exist in such a dialogue, the Central Committee of the Communists Party (PCRM) says in a statement issued on Tuesday. According to the PCRM, "the attempt of the four parliamentary parties – the PLDM, PL, PDM and AMN – to form a so-called Alliance for European Integration (AEI) failed." "During a month, they did not manage to agree either on the distribution of the posts, the structure of the given organization or the basic principles of Moldova's internal and external policy," the statement reads.

The PCRM says it is ready to conduct negotiations with all the parties and their representatives that entered the new Parliament so as to avoid the deepening of the political and economic crisis in Moldova. The Communists Party reiterates that only a responsible dialogue can help eliminate the danger of new early elections and form the democratic power in Moldova, which will promote the interests of all the citizens. The PCRM leader Vladimir Voronin did not come to the discussions initiated by the AEI. The leaders of the four parties waited for him for about an hour. The Alliance's leaders repeatedly said that their position remains unchanged and that they will not

hold a dialogue with the PCRM separately. The AEI holds 53 seats of MP, while the PCRM - 48. The government coalition needs eight more votes to elect the head of state. Info-Prim Neo, 25 August 2009

FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT

Voronin and Medvedev confer on bilateral cooperation issues in Sochi

Moldova's president Vladimir Voronin discussed regional problems and methods of overcoming the economic crisis with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev at a bilateral meeting in Sochi on Friday, Info-Prim Neo reports, quoting Itar-Tass. "Regardless of the political seasons in Russia or in Moldova, our relations are an important factor that unites our countries," the Russian head state said. Before the meeting with Medvedev, Vladimir Voronin told the Russian press that the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict in the 5+2 format will be a separate subject for discussions. He also said that at the October summit of the CIS heads of state that will take place in Chisinau Moldova will pass on the CIS presidency to Russia. This is the third official meeting of the two presidents this year. Info-Prim Neo, 21 August 2009

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Remittances from abroad decrease by 31.8% in 1H2009

The volume of money transfers through banks from Moldovan' physical persons, who work abroad, exceeded US\$515.03 million for the first half-year – down by 31.8% against the same period of 2008. According to the data by the National Bank of Moldova (NBM), US\$419.89 million (81.5%) were transferred by means of quick money transfer systems. The main share of money transfers of 54.2% fell on the U.S. Dollar, 40.8% - on Euro and 5% - on the Russian rouble. According to the optimistic scenario by the Ministry of Economy and Trade, the volume of money transfers in foreign currency in 2009 was the same, as in 2008, when it constituted US\$1.66 billion. According to the pessimistic forecast, the money transfers from the countries where Moldovans work - Russia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey - had to drop by 30% under the influence of the global financial and economic crisis. According to the World Bank (WB), the transfers of Moldovans working abroad constitute about one third of Moldova's GDP. Infotag, 18 August 2009