



Global Expertise. Local Solutions.  
Sustainable Democracy.

# **Elections in Moldova**

## *November 30 Parliamentary Election*

Frequently Asked Questions

Europe and Asia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

1850 K Street, NW | Fifth Floor | Washington, D.C. 20006 | [www.ifes.org](http://www.ifes.org)

November 24, 2014

## Frequently Asked Questions

What are some of the important issues facing Moldova as it heads to the polls on Sunday? .....	1
How will the new Parliament be elected? .....	2
What institutions will administer this election? .....	2
Who is eligible to vote? .....	3
What are the rules for campaign finance? .....	3
What parties are registered to compete in these elections? .....	4
How will disputes be adjudicated? .....	5
Resources: .....	6

### *Disclosure:*

*These FAQs reflect decisions made by Central Election Commission of Moldova as of November 24, 2014, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.*

## **What are some of the important issues facing Moldova as it heads to the polls on Sunday?**

Moldova has had a fraught political landscape in recent years, with no less than five national electoral events taking place between April 2009 and June 2011. More recently, in March 2013, Prime Minister Vlad Filat's ruling government<sup>1</sup> was dissolved after a no-confidence vote following accusations of corruption. In April 2013, the Constitutional Court ruled that Filat, President Nicolae Timofti's nominee for Prime Minister, could not serve again. After much political jostling, the current Pro-European Coalition was formed and Iurie Leanca, another member of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM), assumed the office of Prime Minister. As no single party or bloc is expected to gain a majority in the Parliament, November's elections will again result in a critical period of post-election coalition building to form the next government.

November's elections will once again feature a choice of democratic and liberal pro-European parties, pro-Russian political entities, and the still popular Communist Party, which governed the country from 2001 to 2009. As no single party is expected to gain a majority in the Parliament, these elections will again result in a critical period of post-election coalition building to form the country's next government.

Economic issues dominate concerns of Moldovans. Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe despite recent economic growth, with an average monthly salary of just around 300 USD. According to a recent public opinion poll, one-third of citizens believe they do not have enough even for living essentials, while another 45 percent felt their income was enough for just the essentials.<sup>2</sup> Low income stems from a lack of decent work opportunities. As a result, Moldova is highly dependent on economic migrants and remittances from abroad, which make up a substantial part of many household incomes. Parties have typically made socio-economic issues, including employment and pensions, a key part of their campaigns.

Also relevant to Moldova's financial wellbeing is the question of the country's economic and trade policy. Moldova has been actively pursuing relationships and political and economic integration with the European Union (EU). This month, the European Parliament has ratified Moldova's Deep and Comprehensive Free trade Agreement<sup>3</sup>, bringing it one step closer toward significant political association and economic integration with Europe. Moldova also achieved visa-free status with the EU earlier this year. While many Moldovans have supported a pro-European future and integration fairly consistently, there are many Moldovans who would prefer closer ties to the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union. It is not surprising that while the recent ruling coalitions have been made up of pro-European forces, several parties, such as the Socialists and Patria (Homeland), have aggressively campaigned on a pro-Russia orientation, greater economic integration through the Customs Union and even withdrawal from EU agreements.

The status of Transdniestria continues to be an important issue to Moldovans, perhaps more so recently due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Moldova's Transdniestria region is a small, majority Russian speaking sliver of land largely between the Dniester River and the Ukrainian border. In the early 1990s,

---

<sup>1</sup> Led by Vlad Filat's Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM).

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Public Policy, Barometer of Public Opinion, November 2014.

<sup>3</sup> The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area was introduced as part of EU-Moldova Association Agreement, signed on July 27 2014.

during the collapse of the Soviet Union, this region sought autonomy and independence, leading to a short war between the now independent Moldova and Transnistria separatists. After fighting reached its height in 1992, a cease-fire was signed that included Russian, Moldovan, and Transnistria peacekeepers. Despite many years of negotiations, involving both parties, Ukraine, Russia the EU, and the United States, the status has remained the same: a “frozen conflict.” Transnistria is not recognized by most countries. While voting will likely not take place in the Transnistrian region, Moldovan citizens residing in Transnistria will be afforded the opportunity to vote by their inclusion into the new voter registry system, and specially designated ballot boxes in 25 polling sites for these voters on the Moldovan side of the internal border.

Regarding its neighbor Ukraine, Moldovans were mixed in their degree of support of the protests which began last year. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine between Russian-supported separatists and the government of Ukraine, has an all too familiar feeling to Moldovans, having experienced their own war in the early 1990s, also with elements of Russian interventionism. Even though there has been a conflict on its territory for over 20 years, the issue of national security is becoming more significant in Moldovan life now, as the conflict in Ukraine has unfolded. The Russian annexation of Crimea this spring led some to wonder whether this could be a scenario for the Transnistrian region, or that Russia would somehow try to link the territory with Russia by moving across southern Ukraine. There are also concerns that the conflict could get larger and closer, and even in some way include, Moldova.

## **How will the new Parliament be elected?**

On November 30, 2014, Moldovans will vote in the eighth parliamentary elections since the country’s independence. The elections will be the first since the governing Alliance for European Integration (AEI) collapsed in mid-2013 after a vote of no confidence in Parliament. The current governing coalition, the Pro-European Coalition, represents an extremely fragmented political landscape. This Parliament will be the first to complete its four-year term since 2005.

Moldova has a 101-member unicameral Parliament, with members elected through proportional representation with closed lists in a single nationwide constituency. Parliament members serve a four-year term. Electoral subjects include political parties, blocs, and independent candidates. Parties must reach a 6 percent threshold to enter Parliament. Electoral blocs which consist of two parties must reach a 9 percent threshold, and blocs of three or more parties must reach an 11 percent threshold. Independent candidates can enter Parliament with a 2 percent threshold. All thresholds, except those for independent candidates, are higher than in the previous parliamentary election.

Voters will cast a single ballot with one preference on Election Day. Parliamentary elections are only valid if one-third of all registered voters turn out.

## **What institutions will administer this election?**

The elections will be administered by the Central Election Commission (CEC), 35 District Electoral Councils (DECs), and 2,073 Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs). While the CEC is a permanent body consisting of nine members who serve five-year terms, DECs and PEBs are established for each election. Eight members of the CEC are appointed by political parties, proportional to their representation in Parliament, while the President appoints the final member. One of the nine current CEC members is a woman.

The CEC creates DEC, which consist of between seven and 11 members, at least 50 days before elections. PEBs consist of between five and 11 members and are established no later than 35 days before elections. Both DEC and PEB members are nominated by courts, local councils and political parties in Parliament.

This will also be the first election where the Center for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET) is responsible for training electoral officials. Operational since April 2013, the CCET trains electoral officials and other interested stakeholders, including judges, observers, and candidate and party representatives. The CCET will have trained all members of DEC and PEBs.

Moldova will also open some 95 polling stations abroad, a process facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Who is eligible to vote?**

All Moldovan citizens of the age of 18 and above are eligible to vote, including citizens not currently in the country, and those in hospitals and prisons. There are restrictions on voting for individuals declared incapacitated by a final decision of a court of law, which may be interpreted as exclusionary to voters with intellectual disabilities.

There are approximately 3,072,000 eligible voters in these elections, an increase from 2,734,000 in the 2010 elections. The increase in voters is largely a result of including Moldovan voters residing in Transnistria in the list of registered voters.

Following amendments to the Election Code in April 2014, a State Register of Voters (SRV) will be implemented for the first time in these elections. The SRV data is based off the State Population Register.

Voter lists are made public 20 days before Election Day. Once posted, voters can verify the data or request corrections to be made to the list until the day prior to the elections.

In polling stations outside Moldova, voters lists are drawn based on data collected by consular offices and are displayed and updated at the beginning of the campaign period. Updates to these voter lists are finalized 7 days before Election Day and are then transferred to the Central Election Commission. Precincts abroad will receive the maximum number of ballots allowed—3,000 for each precinct.

Recent changes to the law restrict the types of voter identification used to Moldovan identity cards, thus excluding the previously acceptable use of former Soviet passports as identification. Elderly citizens in rural areas and members of the Roma communities are the most affected by this amendment.

## **What are the rules for campaign finance?**

Campaign finance in Moldova is regulated by the Election Code, the Law on Political Parties, and by Central Election Commission (CEC) regulations. All candidates are required to open bank accounts dedicated to campaign expenses, and are required to submit bi-monthly reports to the CEC on campaign-related income and expenditure. The CEC must then check these reports against bank notifications on account activities, and then posts these on their website.

While candidates can seek private and public financing, donations from foreign and anonymous sources are prohibited. CEC regulations set a campaign spending limit of MDL 55 million<sup>4</sup> for political parties and electoral blocs, and at MDL 2 million<sup>5</sup> for independent candidates.

## **What parties are registered to compete in these elections?**

The Central Election Commission published a list of political organizations that can participate in the elections on September 15, 2014. The political entities in these elections are:

### *Parties:*

- Democratic Party of Moldova: Marian Lupu
- Christian Democratic People's Party: Iurie Rosca
- People's Power Party: Nicolae Chirtoaca
- Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova: Vlad Filat
- Liberal Reformatory Party: Ion Hadarca
- Reformatory Communist Party of Moldova: Ruslan Popa
- Antimafia People's Movement: Sergiu Mocanu
- National Liberal Party: Vitalia Pavlicenco
- Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova: Igor Dodon
- Democratia Acasa (Democracy at Home) Party: Vasile Costiuc
- People's Party of the Republic of Moldova: Alexandru Oleinic
- Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova: Vladimir Voronin
- Liberal Party: Mihai Ghimpu
- Renastere (Renaissance) Party: Vasile Tarlev
- Patria (Homeland) Party: Renato Usatii
- Democratic Action Party: Mihai Godea
- Ecological Green Party: Anatolie Prohnitchi
- Centrist Union of Moldova: Dan Petrache
- Pentru Neam si Tara (For Nation and Country) Party: Nicolae Utica
- Patriots of Moldova Party: Mihail Garbuz

### *Blocs:*

- Alegerea Moldovei — Uniunea Vamala (Moldova's Choice — the Customs Union) Electoral Bloc: Victor Selin

### *Independent candidates:*

- Oleg Cernei
- Oleg Brega
- Valeriu Plesca
- Anatolie Doga

---

<sup>4</sup> Approximately 3.6 million USD.

<sup>5</sup> Approximately 130,000 USD.

## **How will disputes be adjudicated?**

Both voters and candidates can challenge actions and decisions taken by District Electoral Councils (DECs) and Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs), as well as actions taken by candidates. Complaints must first follow set administrative procedures, and respect the electoral body hierarchy (i.e., complaints must be lodged in the electoral body superior to that whose decision is challenged). After exhausting these avenues, complaints may be lodged in court. Complaints against the Central Election Commission (CEC) are filed with the Chisinau Court of Appeals.

All complaints must be lodged within three calendar days of the action or decision, and complaints against electoral competitors and CEC decisions must be resolved within five days. Complaints against a PEB or DEC decision must be resolved within three days, but no later than Election Day.

The CEC has received 45 complaints as of November 18, 2014. Complaints were largely related to the use of administrative resources and campaigning.

## Resources

- Moldovan Central Election Commission: <http://www.cec.md/index.php?l=ro>
- OSCE Interim Election Observation Mission Report:  
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/126735?download=true>
- Association for Participatory Democracy:  
<http://www.edemocracy.md/en/elections/parliamentary/2014/>