



## Moldova

Last update:	24 June 2011
Author:	
Population:	4,317,483 (July 2010 est.)
Prime minister:	Vladimir Filat (since September 2009)
President:	Acting President Marian Lupu (since December 2010)
Governemental type:	Republic
Ruling coalition:	Alliance for European Integration
Last election:	Parliamentary 28 November 2010
Next election:	
Sister parties:	Democratic Party of Moldova (full member status agreed by the SI Council, to be ratified at the next Congress)



On 5 June 2011 local elections were held in Moldova. The elections were seen as a crucial test for the pro-European alliance that was installed in November 2010 following parliamentary elections. Results indicated that the country remains nearly even divided between the three-party Alliance for European Integration (AEI) and the Communist Party.

### INTRODUCTION

Moldova's relationship with the East, Ukraine and Russia, is predominantly shaped by the ongoing and persistent dispute over the region of Transdnister. This conflict started in the early 1990's and so far, despite the international diplomatic interference, no solution has been found. The relationship with the West is determined by the great influence of Romania on Moldovan politics, culture and society. Besides its difficult geo-political position, Moldova has some serious internal problems to deal with too. Poverty, the agricultural dominated economy and the problems with democracy are some of the problems that Moldova faces. Taken this all together, Moldova has, despite its ambitions, still a long way to go before closer ties with the European Union can be achieved.

### ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL SITUATION

#### Electoral system

Moldova is a republic that elects directly the legislature, the Parliament and indirectly the head of state, the President. The Parliament ("Parlamentul") has 101 members, elected for a four-year term by proportional representation. To enter Parliament, the independent candidates must obtain 3% of the total number of the votes, the parties 6%, the electoral blocs (consisting of two parties) at least 9%, and the electoral blocs consisting of more than two parties 12%. According to the electoral law, the "lost votes" of the parties that did not pass the threshold are distributed proportionally among those who did.

The President (head of state) is elected by the Parliament. This was installed in 2000, when the Parliament voted to change the Constitution to strengthen the parliamentary republic. Three fifths of the MPs, or 61 deputies, must elect a President not later than 45 days after the first session. Otherwise, the Parliament dissolves itself and calls for



early elections.

Parliamentary elections 2009 The first Parliamentary elections in 2009 were held on April 5th. The Communist party (PCRM) won a majority of the seats for the third consecutive time. The turnout was 59.49 per cent, exceeding the 50% necessary for the election to be valid. After the election violent protests broke out as the opposition claimed fraud had taken place and demanded new elections. Finally, the votes were recounted and the results were confirmed by the Constitutional Court. Before the election the EU called on Moldova to reform its electoral law, which foresees an electoral threshold of 6% and makes little allowance for alliances of smaller parties, so that smaller parties might also enter Parliament. President Vladimir Voronin rejected these calls.

The ruling PCRM failed to gain the 61 seats required to elect the President, leaving the opposition parties with the possibility of demanding new presidential elections. The ballot recount confirmed these results.

Parties and coalitions	Initial results	After recount	Seats
Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	49.48	49.48	60
Liberal Party	13.14	13.13	14.85
Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	12.43	12.43	15
Party Alliance Our Moldova	9.77	9.77	11
Social Democratic Party	3.70	3.70	–
Democratic Party of Moldova	2.97	2.97	–

#### Post-election violence

Following the announcement of preliminary election results – which gave the Communists the majority of the votes – the opposition rejected the results, accusing the authorities of falsification in the course of vote counting and demanded new elections. Youth activists organised demonstrations in front of the Parliament building in Chişinău on 6–7 April. On 7 April 2009 about 30.000 people gathered on the main Square in Chisinau. The demonstrations threatened to spin out of control and escalated into a riot on that same day. There are reports that the police provoked the demonstrators, even though the opposition and organizers of the demonstration urged them not to reply to these provocations. The government and opposition parties accused each other of sending provocateurs to incite the crowds, although the opposition strongly spoke out against violent demonstrations. President Voronin blamed Romania for masterminding an ‘attempted coup d’etat’ and declared the Romanian ambassador to Moldova a persona non grata in his country. He also recalled the Moldovan envoy from Bucharest, and said Romanians would in future need visas to enter. Romania denied any involvement, and called for a European inquiry into Moldova's "repression" of those who took part. Romanian and other foreign journalists were expelled or barred from entering the country.



The Constitutional Court decided that votes of the Parliamentary elections should be recounted within 9 days. The Central Electoral Commission decided that ballot recount would take place simultaneously in all polling stations nationwide on 15 April. After the vote recount, valid votes were found among the invalid ballots. Nevertheless, their number was insufficient to change the distribution of parliamentary seats. On 21 April, the Central Electoral Commission submitted to the Constitutional Court its decision on totalising the results of the parliamentary elections after the vote recount. On 22 April, the Constitutional Court validated the 5 April elections, despite the requests by PL, PLDM AMN to invalidate the election results. The International Election Observation Mission, represented by delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), and the European Parliament evaluated the elections as positive on the whole.

#### Presidential vote 2009

One of the first tasks of the newly elected Parliament was to elect a new President. President Vladimir Voronin was ineligible for another term, as he already served two terms, the maximum number allowed under the Constitution. A new President had to be elected before 7 July 2009 with a three-fifths majority (61 of 101 votes), otherwise new elections would be held. The Presidential poll held on 20 May failed as all members of the opposition boycotted the voting session due to which there were not enough MPs to elect a new President. As a result, the candidate of the ruling PCRM Zinaida Grechanaya received 60 votes, 1 vote short to be elected President. The PCRM faction tried to come to terms with the opposition to avoid the dissolution of the Parliament. The authorities initiated negotiations with the opposition and offered to the opposition the posts of the vice-speaker and the chairpersons of four out of ten parliamentary committees. However, this did not satisfy the opposition and on 3 June, for the second time, the Parliament failed to elect a new President, as the opposition MPs again boycotted the vote. According to the Constitution, Voronin had to dissolve the assembly and call for new general elections. On 16 June, the Parliament was officially dissolved and elections were announced.

Marian Lupu was speaker of the Moldovan Parliament for the ruling PCRM until May 2009. He left the PCRM after the April elections, saying he was no longer prepared to play their 'dirty games'. After a brief yet hard-fought struggle over him amongst the democratic opposition, he eventually chose the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) as his new home, because "it's the only party that demonstrated political maturity and transparency and is ready for a generation change", said Lupu. Lupu was named the new leader of the PDM and is now the only registered Presidential candidate in Moldova.

#### Early Parliamentary elections 2009

On 29 July early Parliamentary elections took place in Moldova. The results represent a stark change from the April elections, as the PDM now cleared the threshold gaining 12.5%. The ruling PCRM, on the other hand, failed to gain a majority and the pro-Western democratic opposition parties gained the most votes.

Party	%	Mandates
Communist party	44.69	48
Liberal Democratic Party	16.7	18
Liberal Party	14.68	15
Democratic Party	12.54	13
Moldova Nostra Alliance	7.35	7

The victory of PDM must be attributed to its new leader, Marian Lupu. As one of the most popular politicians in the country, Lupu took a great number of Communist voters with him when he left. He was said to account for as many as 15% of the Communist vote.



On 8 August 2009 four parties who entered Parliament signed a coalition pact creating the “Alliance for European Integration” (AEI). The newly formed coalition consisting of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM), the Liberal Party (PL), the Democratic Party (PDM) and the “Moldova Nostra Alliance” (AMN), will among other things, focus on economic reforms. The coalition also wants to push for rapprochement with the European Union and guarantee the protection of human rights and freedom of press. With the pro-western government, Moldova leaves behind a Communist regime that lasted for eight years. The four parties obtained in the July elections a combined number of 53 seats in the 101-seat Assembly. The coalition thus may elect a speaker and a Prime Minister with 51 votes, but not a successor to President Vladimir Voronin, for which at least 61 votes are needed.

#### Parliament fails to elect a President

The coalition needed to convince at least eight Communists parliamentarians out of 48 to vote for their choice of President. The next stage, according to AEI, was to establish a dialogue with the PCRM, in an attempt to gather enough votes to elect the new President. Therefore, AEI officially invited the PCRM to a dialogue on the 21st of August. The PCRM, however, rejected the invitation. Instead, at a PCRM meeting on August 24th, the party decided to attempt to create a left-wing broad coalition of its own. Officials informed of plans to approach separate parties, and not the AEI as a whole. Furthermore, different sources stated that the party would be willing to support PDM leader Marian Lupu’s candidacy for President in the context of the mentioned broad left-wing coalition, mainly including the Communist Party and the PDM. Mr Lupu commented by saying that he would not be involved in any ‘haggling’ with the Communists, since it would simply be an attempt to harm the AEI.

On 10 November the Moldovan Parliament held a scheduled Presidential vote. The only Presidential candidate, PDM leader Lupu, received all 53 votes from the Alliance for European Integration (AEI) MPs. The PCRM refused to provide the eight missing votes for a candidate that left its ranks before the elections and is considered a ‘traitor’ by many Communists. The Communists’ reaction did not come unexpected, as on the previous day the Central Commission of the party obliged the Communist fraction not to vote for Lupu, and to boycott the entire voting procedure. Communist MPs consequently left the Parliament before the vote and did not participate.

On 7 December the second and final attempt to elect a President took place. The Parliament once again failed to do so. Lupu received the 53 votes of the AEI, but PCRM again rejected to participate in the vote. Leader of the Communist fraction, Maria Postoiko, said that the “ruling coalition AEI is performing an anti-social policy and is breaking the Constitution.”

#### Early Parliamentary elections?

According to legislation, the interim President –current speaker of Parliament Mihai Ghimpu– is obliged to dissolve the Parliament and announce early Parliamentary elections. At the same time, the Parliament can only be dissolved one year after the latest elections, i.e. after 16 June 2010. Baring in mind the election campaign, for which not less than 45 days are assigned, Parliamentary elections could only be held in the fall of 2010. In this case, the deadline for the dissolution of the Parliament and the designation of early elections are not stipulated by law.

At the same time, Ghimpu announced that “soon the President will be elected, disregard of the boycott by the Communists”. Ghimpu did, however, not elaborate on how the Parliament plans to overcome the political crisis. In the end of November, Ghimpu signed a decree on the creation of a constitutional reform commission. The commission will identify the shortcomings of the Constitution and formulate proposals for improving it. Among other things, it is aimed to modify the procedure for electing the head of state. PCRM leader Voronin, on the other hand, is hoping that early elections in the fall of next year would undermine the AEI’s governance and boost his chances of a return to power.

#### Constitutional referendum 2010

On 5 September 2010 Moldova’s citizens were asked in a referendum whether Moldova’s president should be elected by popular vote in the future. The turnout of the referendum, however, was not enough for it to pass. According to the Moldovan Central Election Commission 30.29 percent eligible voters casted their vote, while 33.33 percent was needed in order for the referendum to be valid. In accordance with Moldovan regulation Moldova’s interim president Mihai Ghimpu said he will dissolve the parliament and call for early parliamentary elections, most probably on 21 November. Ghimpu said the low turnout is the fault of the Communist Party, which called for a boycott of the vote. He has send his request for dissolving the parliament to the Constitutional Court, which will pronounce its decision on the dissolution on 21 September.



The pro-Western AIE was hoping on a positive outcome of the referendum. In the run-up to the vote the coalition had campaigned for the change as a way to break the political deadlock that has left Moldova without a full-fledged president for 18 months. But as the referendum failed, the current legislation on indirectly electing a president is still in force. In August the ruling coalition underwent some internal frictions as it was supposed to nominate one joint candidate. Yet the Liberal Democrat Party and the DPM wanted each to present their party leaders, PM Vlad Filat and Marian Lupu, as the respective candidates. In accordance with the Constitution early elections were set for November.

#### Parliamentary elections November 2010

On 28 November early Parliamentary elections were held. The Communists secured 42 seats in the Parliament, while the PLDM won 31 seats, PDM 15 and the LP 12. The voter turnout was set at 41.87%. According to international observers the early elections met most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments.

#### Election results

Party	Seats	% Votes
Communist Party	42	32.29
Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM)	31	29.38
Democratic Party (PDM)	15	12.72
Liberal Party (LP)	12	9.96

The other 16 political parties and movement have failed to clear the election thresholds of 4% and 2%, respectively. The Moldova Noastra Alliance and the Actiunea Europeana social-political movement polled 2.05% and 1.23% respectively. The rest of the political forces and all of the 19 independent candidates received less than 1%.

The results show that the political deadlock continues. The political spectrum has not changed and no political force has obtained the necessary majority of 61 mandates in order to elect the head of state. If the three biggest parties of the previous governing coalition could make a coalition, they would be able to form a government. Yet they would still lack the necessary majority to elect a President.

#### Government

On 30 December politicians decided to continue with a pro-Western alliance. The alliance brought together the Liberal Democrats with 32 seats, the Democratic Party with 15 seats, and the Liberals with 12 seats. All together the Alliance for European Integration (AEI) had 59 seats out of 101 seats in the parliament. The parliament elected Democratic Party (PDM) leader Marian Lupu as its speaker. The amount of seats held by the pro-Western alliance did not create the majority necessary to elect a successor to former Communist President Vladimir Voronin: for this decision at least 61 votes are needed. Until an official leader can be named, Marian Lupu will therefore also serve as an interim president.

#### Local elections June 2011

On 5 June 2011 local elections were held in Moldova. About 900 candidates fought for mayoral seats and heads of



other local bodies at the election, which was seen as a test for the pro-European alliance of parties that were put back in power in November 2010 following parliamentary elections. Turnout was reported to be more than 54 percent.

In the race for mayor of the capital Chisinau Communist Party candidate Igor Dodon won 48.07% of the votes, while Dorin Chirtoaca of the Liberal Party won 46.51% of the votes. Democratic Party candidate, Valentina Buliga obtained 2.56% of the votes. As a consequence, a second round was held in Chisinau, in which the communist Igor Dodon and liberal candidate Dorin Chirtoaca fought for the position of general mayor of Chisinau. According to the results of the runoff mayoral voting on 19 June 2011, 50.55% of the electors voted for Dorin Chirtoaca, while 49.45% voted for Igor Dodon. Thereby the Liberal Party's candidate Dorin Chirtoaca officially won the election for mayor of Chisinau.

Overall, the communist Party fared well in the first round of voting in the local elections. In the regional halls the Liberal-Democratic Party (PLDM) gained 25.97% of the votes, followed by the Communist Party (PCRM) –23.78%; the Democratic Party (PDM) – 21.67%; the Liberal Party (LP) – 11.58%; the Social Democratic Party (SDP) – 1,13% and Popular Christian Democratic Party (PCDP) – 1,04%. In local councils the PCRM did lead with 30.25%, followed by the PLDM – 25.52%; the DPM – 19.36%; LP – 11.04%; PCDP – 1,06% and SDP – 0.94%. In district councils the picture was similar: PCRM – 32.71%; PLDM – 25.83%; PDM – 20.23%; LP – 11.30%; PCDP – 1 43%; SDP – 1.17%. Political deadlock and economic hardship appeared to have steered Moldovans towards the opposition Communists in the local elections.

However, in the second round of elections of cities and villages' mayors on 19 June 2011, the three parties of the ruling Alliance for European Integration got most mandates of governors of Moldovan localities. 156 representatives of the PLDM became mayors, 133 representatives of the PDM, 86 of the PCRM, and 78 of the LP. The rest of local governors are representatives of other parties, as well as independent candidates. In the elections of local councils, the parties of the ruling Alliance gained the majority in 27 of 33 local councils.

Moldovan political scientist Octavian Ticu said that the results show how divided the country remains. "The Communists are not gone. In fact, all the victories of the ruling alliance have been hard-fought, and the transformation of Moldova is an arduous process."

According to international observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional, Moldova's local elections largely met OSCE and Council of Europe election-related commitments. "Voters in this election clearly benefitted from a wide range of options," said Britt Marie Lövgren, the head of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities delegation. However, the observers noted that remaining legal, administrative and regulatory issues need to be further considered in order to ensure continued forward progress. Also Moldova's run-off elections provided equitable conditions for contestants, but confirmed need to consolidate progress, the OSCE stated in a press release.

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## IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES

### Transdniester conflict

The most prominent and urgent domestic issue is the conflict over the separatist pro-Russian Transdniester region. The region is situated in the East of Moldova, between the Nistru river and Ukraine. Unlike the Gagauz community, who settled the problem in 1994 by accepting an autonomous status, no solution has been found for this conflict so far. After a cease-fire in 1992, Russian troops, who supported the breakaway republic, started to withdraw. However, as of 2006 Russian troops are still stationed there and are not planning to leave. The Russians claim that they are peacekeepers or forces guarding the Russian arsenal in the region.

The three mediators in the conflict – Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE – worked out a plan for federalisation in January 2004. Parties on both sides criticised the plan. On the one hand it is seen as a minor variation to the earlier rejected "Kozak Memorandum" proposed by Russia, which does not recognize the "anti-constitutional rebellion", the role of the "mafia" and "Russia's geopolitical objectives". The separatists on the other hand, underline that the new plan does not grant Transdniester the status of a state entity, since it makes no mention of separate state symbols for



Transdniestria or of the status of the Russian language. Moldova sees an important role for peace-keepers of the OSCE in the region, while the separatists only want Russian forces. The Transdniestria republic is governed by traditional hard-line communists under the leadership of Igor Smirnov. The Transdniestria authorities are not recognised by any state and are subject to sanctions such as travel bans.

A political declaration of the OSCE calling, a.o. for the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Moldova, was proposed at the OSCE yearly summit in Bulgaria in December 2004. However, it was vetoed by Russia.

The EU decided to play a more active role in the settlement of the conflict. It will have a permanent representation in Moldova. The Special Representative of the EU in Moldova will operate under security coordinator Javier Solana. He was appointed soon after the 6 March elections of 2005. The Dutch former diplomat Adriaan Jacobovits will be the first one to fulfil this post.

On 30 of November 2003 about 50.000 people demonstrated in the streets of Chisinau, calling for a European solution to the countries problems instead of Russian involvement. The European Union has a high stake in the conflict since Transdniestria is a haven for corruption, smuggling and arms trade. According to the International Action Network on Small Arms, terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Fatah buy weapons in Transdniestria – which is denied by the Transdniestria authorities and proof is lacking.

On 17 September 2006, the Transdniestria authorities organised a referendum on the issue of independence for the region. The question was whether the region should follow a path towards independence and possible integration with Russia, or abandon its quest for independence and integrate with Moldova. According to Pyotr Denisenko, the head of Transdniestria's Central Election Commission, 97.1 percent of the Transdniestria voters voted in favour of independence, with an additional 95 percent saying no to reunification with Moldova. Moldova and Western countries have said not to recognise the referendum and have called for renewed negotiations with Moldova.

#### Poverty

Official figures show that Moldova recorded a GDP growth of 4,6% (est.) in 2006. However, the economic growth does not contribute to improvement of living standards. Moldova continues to be the poorest country in Europe, ranked between Mongolia and Honduras on the Human Development Index 2006 of the United Nations. According to the CIA World Fact Book an estimated 29,5% (2005 est.) of the population lives below the poverty line.

The economy depends heavily on agriculture (fruits, vegetables, wine, and tobacco). Moldova must import all of its supplies of oil, coal, and natural gas, largely from Russia. Energy shortages contributed to sharp production declines after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Moldova is highly dependent on loans from the international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank and fails to meet payments in foreign debt. Most of the economic growth of Moldova is based on consumption fuelled by remittances received from Moldavians working abroad.

The poverty leads to illegal practices such as women trafficking and human organ trade. In addition, many Moldavians emigrate to search for a better future elsewhere or try to obtain Romanian or Russian citizenship. It is estimated one million Moldavians – or half of the country's workforce and potential voters – has left Moldova over the years.

Politicians often point at the failure to solve the Transdniestria conflict as the main source for economic backwardness. However, according to a research of Gottfried Hanne, political officer of the OSCE mission in Moldova, this can be mainly attributed to governmental policy and lack of reforms. Also the widespread corruption contributes to an unattractive business investment environment.

#### Political and media freedom

The influential NGO "Freedom House" and the Council of Europe noticed a worsening of the political climate since the communists came to power. In February 2002 a coalition of 30 Moldavian NGO's blamed the communists for "using the public media as a Communist propaganda machine, violating political pluralism, neglecting decisions by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) that concern Moldova, and marginalizing the Romanian language in favour of Russian."

The demonstrations organised by the Christian democrats that endured from the 9 January to the 29 April 2002



were ended only after involvement of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which called for strengthening of the legal protection of the parliamentary opposition, more freedom of press, and an end to the process of Russification. The government saw the intervention of PACE as a defeat and opposed the implementations of the recommendations.

In their 2006 report on Moldova, Freedom House scores Moldova 3 out of 5 on political rights and 4 out of 5 on Civil Liberties. Freedom House concludes that Moldova is only partly free on these issues. With respect to the media–freedom, Freedom House concludes that Moldova is not free. In the capitol Chisinau, a reasonable number of different newspapers can be found. However, in the rural areas this number is much lower. This is marked as highly problematic by Freedom House and is seen as the most worrying developments for the press–freedom in the country.

The OSCE Mission Head in Moldova, Louis O’Neill, has expressed his concerns about the lack of free media in Moldova. In a statement he said: “I urge the Moldovan authorities to exercise restraint in the future. It is vital to ensure that journalists can report freely and that citizens enjoy their right to free expression. (...)” Besides his concerns about the lack of media freedom in Moldova, O’Neill also emphasised the importance of ensuring equal conditions for political parties in Moldova to handle their electoral campaign in the run–up to the local elections of 2007. In his opinion, to often opposition parties had many difficulties in ensuring their “playing field” during the electoral campaign.

#### Foreign relations– Russia

The relations with Russia have been dominated by the involvement in the Transdnier conflict and by Moldova’s economic, cultural and political dependence on Russia. In an interview President Vladimir Voronin said Russia will retain a key role in the settlement of the Transdnier conflict. He said that thanks to Russia’s assistance, Chisinau and Tiraspol were “very close to a [final] settlement of the conflict” in November 2003. He described Russian–Moldavian relations as “unshakable” and said anyone who attempts to undermine them is doomed to fail. He also said Moldova’s efforts to achieve European integration will not come at Russia’s expense or disadvantage. From the Russian side no serious attempts to withdraw the troops have been made and involvement in the Transdnier conflict will endure. Russian involvement is a source for heated discussions and demonstrations of oppositional groups and nationalists.

Russian influence is large as can be read from a recent a critical statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Russia’s plan to have 17 polling stations in Moldova for Russian citizens participating in the country’s 14 March 2004 Russian presidential elections, without consulting the Moldavian government.

Besides close historical ties with Russia, the ruling party PCRM has more and more the objective to focus on European integration rather than on closer ties with Russia. This “flirt” with the West has damaged the Russian – Moldovan relationship seriously. In January 2006, Russia decided to temporarily ban all the wine and meat coming from Moldova. On a yearly basis, approximately €250 million is brought into Moldova through this type of exchange. In November 2006, Russia lifted the restrictions. Officially, Russia banned the wine and meat due to a lack of quality of the products. Analysts say, however, that it is another attempt by Moscow to punish former Soviet states for severing ties with Russia.

#### Foreign relations– Romania

Romania plays an important role in the history of Moldova and also culturally both countries have commonalities. The Moldavian language is virtually the same as the Romanian language. Bessarabia, the land between the Prut and Nistru rivers, is predominantly ethnic Romanian in population and constitutes the eastern half of a region historically known as Moldova. Until 1940 the region was ruled by Romania, after which it became part of the Soviet Union.

Relations between Romania and Moldova while generally very good, are not free of troubles. Especially since the communists came to power in 2001 the relation between Moldova and Romania worsened considerably. The communist authorities underlining the Russian connection have raised fears in Bucharest for the return of a soviet approach to the identity of Bessarabian Romanians.

The Moldavian government pursued a policy of small steps, opening a Moldavian–Romanian trade centre, discussing



trilateral co-operation between Romania, Ukraine and Moldova and planning revival of the Euro-regions of the Lower Danube and the Upper Prut. However, after accession of Romania to the EU, Moldavians will need visa to enter Romania, which might further harm the relationship.

#### Foreign relations- EU

The Moldovan government sees good relations with the EU as a priority strategic long-term objective. Moldova is a member of the Council of Europe since 1995. The European option is seen as a means for the maintenance and consolidation of independence and assurance of stability and security of the country and its citizens. Also it is expected that co-operation with the EU will help to raise the standard of living.

Moldova established relationships with the European Union in 1992, when it was included in the program of assistance provided to the newly independent states. The present relationships between the Republic of Moldova and European Union consists of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed in 1994.

In 2005, the European Union send a special representative to Moldova in order to find a solution in the Transdnister conflict. Furthermore, the Delegation of the European Commission opened an office in Chisinau. In December 2005, Moldova welcomed the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to fight smuggling, strengthen the customs procedures and facilitate cross-border cooperation between at the Ukrainian-Moldovan border.

In accordance with the Action Plan with the EU, Moldova is on the path of harmonising its laws with the laws of the European Union. Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen said that Moldova could become a "pioneer" in implementing the Action Plan for the "New Neighbours," which neither offers nor rules out eventual EU membership.

On 7 May 2009 Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin did not attend the European Union's Eastern Partnership summit in Prague, Foreign Minister Andrei Stratan went instead. The EU downplayed his absence by saying that countries were free to decide whom to send, and that this did not mean Moldova does not want to cooperate with the EU. The Eastern Partnership summit was held in order for the EU to establish better and stronger ties with former Soviet republics. Voronin criticized the EU plan to offer his country and five other form Soviet republics "too little" cooperation in the Eastern Partnership. The EU plan did not promise eventual EU membership to the six countries and Voronin said Chisinau wants an association agreement that could lead to membership. Voronin also said that the Eastern Partnership is directed against Chisinau ally Moscow and is meant to create new spheres of influence in Eastern Europe.

#### Foreign relations - US

Moldova sent 24 Moldavian peacekeepers to Iraq at the request of the United States. The Moldavian battalion is serving in humanitarian operations. Concerning the Transdnister conflict the U.S. expressed its worries about the dominant role of the Russians. The leader of Transdnister, Igor Smirnov, in return condemned the depicting of Transdnisters as terrorists.

#### Foreign relations - GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development

In 1998, Moldova was one of the founding countries of GUAM, the regional cooperation agreement between Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. The regional cooperation consists of information exchange, trade and transportation, border control and energy projects. Most important, GUAM initially included an agreement on mutual defence. However, Moldova ever since declared its disinterest in the construction of a mutual defence system. In 2006, the organisation has changed its name in GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development.

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## SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) [www.pdm.md](http://www.pdm.md)

President: Dumitru Diacov

Affiliations: observer status Socialist International



On 10 February 2010, the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) and the Social Liberal Party (PSL) officially merged under the slogan "We Come to Build." The opposition parties formed a new democratic party through the disbandment of the PSL, which was then absorbed into the PDM. The renewed PDM continued under its old name, and pledged "for the affirmation of the Republic of Moldova as an independent, unitary and democratic state, based on the rule of law and integrated in the united family of European democracies."

The PSL was created in 2001 by representatives of the intelligentsia, students, and civil society organisations. It aimed to present an alternative to the Communist government, but also to the failed democratic forces, with which the public had gotten disappointed. Prior to merging, the PSL was a member of the Liberal International, whereas the PDM had strong relations with the European Social Democratic parties and holds an observer status in the Socialist International. The renewed PSL remained the contacts with the Social Democratic parties, and declared on the 10 February 2010 party congress that it "reaffirms its affiliation to the principles and the values of the Socialist International."

The PDM supports the integration of Moldova in the EU and NATO, and keeps a social democratic orientation.

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Social Democratic Party of Moldova (PSDM) [www.psdm.md](http://www.psdm.md)  
Chairman of the party: Victor Cielin  
International affiliation: Observer status in Socialist International (SI)

The Social Democratic Party is a merger of the Social Democratic Party of Moldova and the Party of Social Democracy (PSD). On 22 December 2007, the two parties officially united and the party is currently led by Victor Cielin.

The two parties had already announced their intention to merge in June 2007, after the national elections at which the parties combined had polled nearly 7% of the votes, but individually failed to pass the threshold. The former PSDM was founded in 1991, and is one of the oldest parties in post-Soviet Moldova. It has, however, always been small and was never represented in parliament, although it did gain representation in a limited number of municipalities. The party was known as a very European oriented party, and has received the observer status in the SI. It furthermore has extensive contacts with different parties and foundations within EU member states. Most noticeably, the party regularly voices fierce anti-communist rhetoric.

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## OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES

Party of Communists of Republic of Moldova (PCRM) [www.pcrm.md](http://www.pcrm.md)  
Leader: Vladimir Voronin (also president of the country)  
International affiliation: Party of European Left

The PCRM is a communist political party in Moldova, led by Vladimir Voronin. The PCRM was registered as a political party in 1994 and until 2003 it had extensive relations with Russia. According to its Statute adopted in 2008, article 1, the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova is a "lawful successor and heir of the Communist Party of [Soviet] Moldavia both in terms of ideas and traditions". The PCRM has outlined the following goals for the country: a new quality of life; economic modernisation and consolidation of the society. Under Vladimir Voronin, the PCRM privatized several state-owned industries. It also favours European integration and eventual EU membership.

The PCRM is the only communist party to have held a majority in government in the post-Soviet states. It was the ruling political party in Moldova for a long time. Currently it is the main opposition party in Moldova. After the November 2010 parliamentary election, the democratic parties won the most votes and created a governing alliance, the "Alliance For European Integration." As a consequence, the PCRM became the biggest opposition party.

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Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) Leader: Vlad Filat

The Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) is a centre-right political party in the Republic of Moldova. The Party's Founding Congress was held on 8 December 2007 and Vlad Filat was elected as president. In their statements, the initiative group members composed of 53 leaders acknowledged the profound crisis in the Republic of Moldova and the inability of political parties to face the situation. The Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova emerged as a capable alternative to start the process of moral reorganization of the political class, rebirth and modernization of the country and reestablishment of the society back on its natural track of democratic development.

The party attracted a large number of prominent members of the civil society and at the parliamentary elections of 29 July 2009 the PLDM obtained 16.57 % of the votes. At the early parliamentary elections of 28 November 2010 the PLDM doubled its results, obtaining 32.2% of the votes, 32 deputies.

The strategic programmatic goal set by this party is the reconstruction and modernization of the Republic of Moldova, as well as the establishment of rule-of-law state and efficient market economy. In its program, the Liberal Democratic Party aims at becoming the main driver for overcoming economic, social and civilization gaps.

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Liberal Party (LP) <http://www.pl.md/>  
Leader: Mihai Ghimpu

The Liberal Party was created at the unifying Congress of March 24th 2002, on the basis of the merger of the Party of Rebirth and Reconciliation of Moldova (1995); the National Peasant Christian-Democratic Party (1993) and the Social Liberal Union "Force of Moldova".  
It is a conservative liberal party.

The Liberal Party has centred its program on the liberal doctrine and on the most recent neo-liberal achievements. The Liberal Party is largely represented in the local public administration and has Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen at the Councils of the territorial units of grade II, thousands of local counsellors, hundreds of mayors, etc. After the July 2009 parliamentary election, the party became a coalition partner within the Alliance for European Integration. In the parliamentary elections in November 2010 it gained 9,96% of the votes and has now 12 seats in parliament.

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People's Christian Democratic Party (CDPP) [www.cdpp.md](http://www.cdpp.md)  
Leader: Iurie Rosca

International Affiliations: full member of Christian Democratic International (CDI) and observer member of the European People's Party (EPP); youth organisation is a member of Youth European People's Party.

Created in May 1989, the CDPP fought against Communism and for the fall of the USSR. Since then, this party remained an influential player in Moldovan politics. Its leader Iurie Rosca became deputy speaker of Parliament. This was a major change of the course of the development of the CDPP, which for 15 years was ardently anti-Communist. It is the successor of the Democratic Movement of Moldova (1988-1989), Popular Front of Moldova (1989-1992), and the Christian Democratic Popular Front (1992-1999). In March 2005, the party became an observer member of the European People's Party (EPP). The party is a full member of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM).

The CDPP is a major propagator of the Euro-Atlantic integration of Moldova.

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Patria-Rodina (electoral bloc) [www.patria-rodina.md](http://www.patria-rodina.md)  
Leader: Boris Muravschi

While the Communist Party is not pro-Russian anymore, some of the hardcore pro-Russian electorate vote for Patria-Rodina (Motherland) and Ravnopravie (Justice). Patria-Rodina was created by the Socialist Party of Moldova and the Party of Socialists of Moldova, as well as the Young Komsomol of Moldova.

Patria-Rodina did not manage to pass the high threshold to enter parliament. However, in the Russian-speaking autonomous region Gagauzija it received more than 50% of the votes. It propagates that the future of Moldova does not lie in the West, but in the East. It aims to cooperate more with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The final goal is full integration with the Russian Federation.

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Party of Ecology of Moldova "Green Alliance" (PEM-AVE)  
Leader: Vladimir Braga  
Affiliation: European Green Party (observer)

This party, created in 1992, has participated in all elections in Moldova but has never succeeded to gain seats in parliament or representation in local government. It has a clear green ideology, on the example of many other Green European parties. It is an observer member of the European Green Party.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

Mihai Ghimpu  
Acting President of the Republic of Moldova and Speaker of Parliament

Mihai Ghimpu was born on 19 November, 1951, in Chişinău. In 1978, he graduated from the Department of Law at the Chişinău State University. He worked as a lawyer from 1978 to 1990. He furthermore headed legal departments of several state enterprises and worked as a judge at the Chişinău's Râncani District Court.

At the end of the 1980's, Ghimpu joined the Democratic Movement. In 1989, he was one of the founders of the movement's successors, the Popular Front of Moldova – known as one of the leading political forces in the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) – which was later succeeded by the Christian-Democratic People's Party.

Ghimpu was elected Member of Parliament (MP) on the list of the Popular Front in 1990. In the Parliamentary elections four years later, he was elected as a representative for the Bloc of Intellectuals. Several year later, in 1997, Ghimpu was elected Chairman of the Party of Reform – the current Liberal Party. Between 2007 and 2009, he was member of the Chişinău Municipality Council.

During the early Parliamentary vote in July 2009, he was re-elected MP. A month later, on 28 August, he was elected Speaker of the Parliament. Ghimpu became Moldova's acting President on 11 September, 2009, after former (Communist) President Vladimir Voronin resigned.

Mihai Ghimpu is married. He speaks Romanian, Russian and French.

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Vladimir Filat  
Prime Minister of Moldova



Vladimir Filat was born on 6 May, 1969, in the village of Lȃpușna. In 1994, he obtained his university degree in law at the University of Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Iași. Between 1994 and 1998, Filat was an entrepreneur and started and conducted several businesses in Romania. He became the general director of the Department of Privatization and State Property Administration at the Ministry of Economy and Reform in 1998. He held this position merely a year. In 1999, Filat became the Minister of State of the Government of Moldova.

From 1997 to 2007, Filat was member of the Democratic party of Moldova (PDM). In 2000, he was elected vice-president of the PDM. Five year later, he was elected MP on the list of the PDM in the 2005 general elections.

Filat left the PDM in September 2007, after he ran for mayor in the 2007 local election but gained little votes. In December that year, he became the President of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova. On 25 September, 2009, Filat was appointed Prime Minister by a Presidential decree.

Vladimir Filat is married and has two children.

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#### Marian Lupu

Leader of the Democratic Party (PDM) of Moldova

Marian Lupu was born on 20 June, 1966, in the Balti municipality. His family moved to Chisinau when he was six years old. In 1987, he graduated with honors from the Faculty of Commerce and Economy at the Moldovan State University. He obtained his PhD in Economics in 1991, at the Plekhanov Russian Academy of Economics in Moscow.

In 1991, Lupu started working at the Ministry of Economy in the External Economic Relations' department, first as senior specialist. He was appointed Director of this department in 1997. During 1992–2000, Lupu was also the executive Director of the EU's TACIS–Moldova Program, which aims to promote the transition to a market economy and to reinforce democracy and the rule of law in Eastern European partner states.

On May 24, 2001, the government assigned Lupu Deputy Minister of Economy in the Communist Cabinet of Vasile Petru Tarlev. On 5 August, 2003, his position was upgraded to Minister of Economy by then acting President, Vladimir Voronin. Lupu held this position until March, 2005. During this time, he also started his career in the Parliament.

On 6 March, 2005, Lupu was elected Member of Parliament (MP) on the list of the Party of Communists (PCRM). In the same month, he was elected the Parliament's Chairman, after the Communists won yet another election. Lupu held this post until May, 2009.

In December, 2008, President Voronin excluded Lupu from the Supreme Security Council – a consultative body which analyzes the activity of Ministries in the field of national security and presents recommendations to the President. Within the Communist party Lupu was a member of high rank, thus this decision was a remarkable one. Lupu was, furthermore, considered to be one of the leading candidates to succeed Zinaida Greceanîi as Prime Minister after she stepped down. He left the PCRM just before Parliament for the second time tried to elect the country's next President on 3 June, 2009, saying it was impossible to reform the structure of the PCRM from within. Lupu then joined the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) on 15 June, 2009. On 19 July, 2009, he was elected Chairman of the PDM. Ten days later, he was elected MP on the list of the PDM in the July general elections.

After the democratic opposition won the early poll, Lupu together with Vlad Filat, Mihai Ghimpu and Serafim Urechea signed to create the "Alliance for European Integration" coalition on 8 August, 2009. Lupu was the only opposition Presidential candidate in the Presidential race for the first and second round, after Vladimir Voronin resigned the post on 11 September, 2009. The Parliament, however, has failed to elect the President.

Marian Lupu is married and has two children. He speaks Romanian, French, English and Russian.

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Vladimir Voronin

Former President of Moldova and current leader of the Communist Party

Vladimir Voronin was born on May 25, 1941, in the village Corjova. Although he has a 'Russian' name, his origin is ethnic Romanian. Voronin graduated from the Co-operative College in Chisinau in 1961, and in 1971 he graduated from the Union Institute for Food Industry. In 1983, Voronin finished the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and in 1991 he graduated from the Academy of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union.

Between 1966 and 1971, Voronin held different functions, such as director of different bread factories. In the following ten years, he worked in the state administration of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR). From 1983, he was an inspector and the vice-director of the Organization Section of the Central Committee of the Moldovan branch of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Between 1988 and 1990, Voronin was Minister of Internal Affairs in the MSSR.

In 1993, Voronin obtained a new position, when he became the Co-President of the Organizational Committee for the creation of the Party of Communists of Moldova (PCRM). The Communist party was banned between 1991 and 1993 and Voronin played a central role in reviving the party. Voronin was elected Chairman of the PCRM in 1994. In the general elections in March 1998, Voronin was elected MP and simultaneously he was the Chairman of the PCRM in the fraction in the Parliament. One year later, the acting President of Moldova – Petru Lucinschi – nominated Voronin as Prime Minister. The nomination did, however, not sustain as it was not supported by the majority of the Parliament. Voronin was re-elected MP in the general elections in February, 2001. That year, on 4 April, Voronin was elected President of Moldova. He was re-elected in the Presidential elections on 4 April 2005.

In the Parliamentary elections held on 5 April, 2009, the PCRM finished with 60 seats, which was one seat too few to elect a President. After Voronin retained his seat as interim President and was elected Speaker of Parliament, massive demonstrations broke out to protest the election outcome. In the early Parliamentary elections held in July, 2009, the PCRM lost its Parliamentary majority. Hereafter, Voronin decided to resign as President and left this post on 11 September, 2009.

Vladimir Voronin is married and has two children.