

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Moldova

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>16</td> <td></td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change			Polity:	8	8	0			Democ:	8	8	0			Autoc:	0	0	0			Durable:		16				Tentative:		No				<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Authority Trends, 1991-2007: Moldova</p> </div>
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SCODE	MLD	CCODE	359	Date of Report	1 November 2008																																
Polity IV Component Variables																																					
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																																
3	3	4	7	2	3																																
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																																					
End Date			Begin Date																																		
			27 August 1991 (Ind.)																																		
Polity Fragmentation: Yes, Trans-Dniester (c.15%)																																					
Constitution	1994/2000																																				
Executive(s)	President Vladimir Voronin (PCRM); initially elected by Parliament in March 2001; reelected 4 April 2005																																				
Legislature	Unicameral: Parliament (101 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 6 March 2005) Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM): 56 Electoral Bloc Democratic Moldova (BMD): 34 Christian Democratic People's Party (PPCD): 10																																				
Judiciary	Supreme Court; Constitutional Court																																				

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

Petru Lucinschi, the country's Soviet-era communist leader and post-independence Parliament Speaker, ran for the presidency in 1996 and won the election with the support of the entrenched ex-communist executive bureaucracy. Despite repeated efforts by President Lucinschi to strengthen the executive branch, the National Assembly refused to increase the powers of the presidency. Lucinschi's term expired in the fall of 2000 but the sitting Parliament was unable to elect a new president as no candidate was able to muster a majority vote. Centrists within the National Assembly consistently sought to block the Communist Party candidate, Vladmimit Voronin, from becoming the new president of Moldova. After four failed attempts to select a president, President Lucinschi called for new parliamentary elections to be held in February 2001. In the wake of these elections Vladimir Voronin, the leader of the new parliamentary majority party, the

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

PCRM, was selected as president in March 2001. Voronin was the first communist to be democratically elected in the former Soviet Union, and was re-elected in parliamentary elections on 4 April 2005, in which the PCRM continued to dominate. In recent years, Voronin has been accused of politically motivated arrests, particularly against opponents of the Communist Party.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

Under the 1994 constitution Moldova was designated as a “presidential-parliamentary republic.” However, since the constitution did not adequately define how executive powers were to be shared between the prime minister and the president, there was a constant power struggle within the executive branch. Efforts by President Lucinschi to transform the political system into a pure presidential system, while popular with the population, nevertheless, failed to gain any traction with members of Parliament. In an effort to derail attempts by President Lucinschi to change the constitution, in 1999 Parliament passed an amendment to the constitution that established Moldova as a “parliamentary republic.” These changes fundamentally weakened the powers of the presidency and made the chief executive dependent on the legislature’s continued support to remain in office. The amendments also eliminated the president’s ability to initiate legislation and essentially gave the greatest authority to the majority party or group in the legislature. The current president’s party, the PCRM, currently holds a wide majority in the National Assembly. In the past, the judiciary has been unduly influenced by the executive branch but there have been indications in the past few years that judicial independence is increasing.

Political Participation: Factional Competition (7)

As in several other post-Soviet states, most political parties and blocs in Moldova are fluid and sectarian or personalistic in nature. The list of contending parties and blocs changes with each new election cycle. Despite the weakness of political parties in Moldova, for much of the post-independence era competition for political power was waged between two rival factions with distinct policy differences regarding the issue of national sovereignty. One faction, led by ex-President Lucinschi and ex-Prime Minister Braghis, has favored a strongly nationalistic political course for Moldova. In the opposition camp has been a coalition of forces, led by Communist Party leader Vladimir Voronin, who favors closer ties with Russia. The struggle between the two factions was antagonistic and hostile throughout most of 2000 as neither faction was able to tilt a relative balance of power in its favor during initial attempts to elect a new president. Only after new parliamentary elections were held in early 2001 did the balance of power shift, albeit temporarily, in favor of the pro-Russian faction. Efforts by the new president to reintroduce compulsory Russian-language lessons in schools sparked large-scale street protests in January and February 2002. The largely Romanian-speaking population viewed this language policy as a first step in bringing Moldova directly into Russia’s sphere of influence. While the Russian language plan was eventually abandoned, the street protests against the government of President Voronin escalated in the spring of 2002 after the disappearance of well-known opposition leader, Vlad Cubreacov. While President Voronin threatened the use of force to end these protests, the unwillingness of either the military or the police to carry out these threats left the government with little control over the political arena in Moldova. Recognizing the political liabilities associated with pursuing a pro-Moscow platform, since 2002 the Communists have made a complete turnaround and now support greater ties to the European Union. This policy compromise has weakened the factional division in Moldova, although the fault line between supporters of Voronin and supporters of Lucinschi and Braghis remains an important feature of Moldovan political participation.

The Trans-Dniester issue continues to plague Moldova, as it has since 1990-1992 when the Russian and Ukrainian majority in this industrial region (51% of the regional population) declared their secession from Moldova and initiated an armed rebellion. The Slavic population feared that the Moldovan-dominated state would seek reunification with Romania. Even though unification with Romania was rejected in a 1994 referendum, Slavic nationalists continued to seek independent statehood for the self-proclaimed “Dniester Moldovan Republic.” The Trans-Dniester region maintains de facto separation from Moldova, although local leaders continue to deal with Moldova’s leadership in an effort to forge an acceptable reunification arrangement. The Trans-Dniester leadership insists on a confederation that would preserve full autonomy for the region.