

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Moldova

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td colspan="3">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td colspan="3">No</td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	8	8	0	Democ:	8	8	0	Autoc:	0	0	0	Durable:	19			Tentative:	No			<p style="text-align: center;">Authority Trends, 1991-2010: Moldova</p> <p>The graph shows a significant increase in authority scores starting in 1991, reaching a plateau around 2000. The x-axis represents years from 1945 to 2010, and the y-axis represents authority scores from -10 to 10. A vertical dashed line is drawn at 1991. The score starts at approximately 5 in 1991, rises to about 7 by 1992, and then remains relatively stable around 7-8 through 2010.</p>
Score:	2009	2010	Change																						
Polity:	8	8	0																						
Democ:	8	8	0																						
Autoc:	0	0	0																						
Durable:	19																								
Tentative:	No																								
SCODE	MLD	CCODE	359	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
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)																									
Acting President Marian Lupu; former President Vladimir Voronin resigned 11 September 2009 and was replaced temporarily by former speaker of parliament Mihai Ghimpu; Lupu, the current speaker of parliament, is acting as president until new elections scheduled for 18 November 2011																									
Legislature																									
Unicameral: Parliament (101 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 28 November 2010) Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM): 42 Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM): 32 Democratic Party (PD): 15 Liberal Party: 12																									
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

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.

majority vote. Centrists within the National Assembly consistently sought to block the Communist Party candidate, Vladimir 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 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.

Legislative elections held on 5 April 2009 were won by the Communist Party of Moldova (PCM; 60 seats), although it failed to secure the number of seats needed to elect a president (61 needed). The election triggered mass protests by the opposition, composed mainly of members of the pro-Western, ethnic-Romanian majority. The opposition boycotted parliament forcing its dissolution on 15 June 2009 and new elections were held on 29 July 2009. The pro-Western alliance won these elections, ending nine years of Communist party rule. While the opposition coalition gained a majority of seats, the PCM won 48 seats, enough to block the election of a president. The Speaker of Parliament, Mihai Ghimpu of the Liberal Party, was designated Acting President according to provisions of the constitution on 11 September 2009 until new elections can be held.

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. 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.

With the elections of June 2009, the political system entered a prolonged period of intense political deadlock. While the pro-Western alliance won a majority of seats, the Communist party remained the largest single party in the legislature. The strength of the Communist party prevented the government from electing a president and threatened the stability of the governing coalition. According to the Moldovan constitution, a parliament that fails to elect a president must be dissolved and new elections held.

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 appeared, briefly, to weaken 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. Strongly contested legislative elections held on 5 April 2009 were won by the Communist Party of Moldova (PCM; 60 seats) but failed to secure the number needed to elect a president (61 votes needed). The election triggered mass protests by the opposition, composed mainly by members of the ethnic-Romanian majority. The opposition boycotted parliament forcing its dissolution on 15 June 2009 and new elections were held on 29 July 2009. The opposition coalition gained a majority but the PCM won 48 seats, enough to block election of a new president.

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.

On 28 November 2010 the Alliance for European Integration (AIE) won a majority of seats in the Moldovan parliament. However, the Alliance fell two seats short of reaching the three-fifths threshold of 61 votes needed to elect a president. The Communist party, which remained the country's single-most-popular party, refused to compromise with the Alliance on the selection of a new president. A political deadlock between these two camps had already led to the collapse of the previous government and the call for early elections. While the previous government had sought to end the deadlock by changing the constitution to allow for a popular vote on the presidency, a referendum on this issue, held in September 2010, failed due to a low turnout of voters. In late January 2011, Vladimir Voronin, leader of the Communist party, reiterated his position that his party would not back the nomination of Marian Lupu, a former communist, to be elected president. Lupu, leader of the Democratic Party, was elected on 30 December 2010 by the Moldovan parliament to be both its speaker and "acting president". Lupu, whose Democratic Party shares power with the Liberal Democrats and the Liberals, was elected with 57 votes. Acting President Lupu then signed a Presidential Decree on 31 December appointing Vladimir Filat to the post of prime minister. The Communist party has called on the Constitutional Court to set a date on holding new elections.