

---

---

# POLITICAL & SECURITY STATEWATCH

---

---

Monthly analytical bulletin on Moldova  
issued by IDIS VIITORUL

---

---

## FOCUS

---

---

■ **Domestic Policy Sector:**

“VOTERS TRUST OPPOSITION PARTIES, BUT WOULD NOT VOTE FOR THEM”

■ **Foreign Policy Sector:**

“BATTLEGROUNDS MOLDOVA: SOFT POWER VS. HARD POWER”

■ **Security Policy Sector:**

“WHAT ARE THE MAIN THREATS TO MOLDOVA’S SECURITY?”



The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDS) Viitorul is a research, education and outreach organization which activates in the field of economic analysis, governance, law, political sciences, strategic and organizational science. It was set up in June 1993 in Moldova as a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, non-political entity.

[WWW.VIITORUL.ORG](http://WWW.VIITORUL.ORG)

---

---

## ■ Domestic Policy Sector

### VOTERS TRUST OPPOSITION PARTIES, BUT WOULD NOT VOTE FOR THEM

by Ion Marandici  
ionmarandici@gmail.com

#### **Summary**

The most important developments in the domestic politics were the local elections for Rezina district council, the draft of the new political program of the Communists Party from Republic of Moldova (PCRM), the discussion about the local budgets, but also of the Law of the National Budget for 2008 and the proposal of a clear strategy to join European Union by the youth organization of an opposition party.

#### **Continuing the local elections and the fight for budgets**

The Rezina District Council failed to become functional and the polling sections from the Rezina district opened again on November 11, in order for the voters to choose new district councilors. The Rezina experience should be a lesson for the opposition parties. At the election from November 11, PCRM obtained the majority in the District Council. The scrutiny showed how volatile and changing are the voters preferences, when the local councilors from different political parties cannot find the formula of compromise. The surprise at the Rezina elections was the success of the Social Liberal Party, which managed to situate on the second place gaining six councilors. The success was shadowed later when the same councilors decided to change the party and turned to PLDM. They were dissatisfied with the suspect rapprochement between PSL and PD. Both parties announced already their intention to merge. Local press mentioned numerous infringements and cases of administrative resources usage by the Communists. The absence of the international and national observers encouraged the excessive use of administrative resources.

One of the consequences of the failure of the non-Communists party in Rezina was the signing of a Declaration by eight parties (AMN, PDM, PDS, PSDM, PPR, PL, PSL, and UCM) that

constituted majorities in the district councils. The Declaration expressed the concerns of the eight parties regarding the Budget Law for 2008. The eight consider the Budget Law for 2008 a discriminatory document. Interesting is that the Christian Democrats did not sign the Declaration. It became obvious that in the last time, Christian Democrats are much more tempered with their criticisms towards the Government. Not only parties are dissatisfied with the current Budget Law, the National League of the Mayors Associations considers that the Budget Law favors the districts under the Communist control. The mayors complain that they have too many competences and no financial resources.

#### **High level of trust, but fewer votes for the non-Communist parties**

The Rezina elections and the last opinion polls show that the joy of those praising the decline of the PCRM was premature. Communists reorganized and intensified their activity. In what concerns the voting intention, the last two polls, one launched by Institute for Public Policies (IPP) and the other by IMAS-Inc show that PCRM's position is slightly weaker, but it continues to overshadow decisively the political landscape. In case any parliamentary election would take place, PCRM would win again the majority in the Parliament, because of the high popularity and the system of redistribution of seats.

Three indicators are essential in that context: the voting intention, the trust in parties and the trust in politicians. The real popularity of a party is showed by the indicator called voting intention that was calculated from the responses of those, who expressed their support for a party. The IMAS poll shows that an eventual counterweight to PCRM (47%) would be a large coalition formed at least from the six parties following PCRM on the voting

intention list. If summed up, the popularity of AMN, PL, PD, PPCD, PDS then they would gather 47,4% of the votes. The poll launched by IPP is more pessimistic in this regard. According to that poll PCRМ is preferred by 45,4% of the voters, and the coalition comprising the six following parties would gather only 42,9% from the votes and would be insufficient to counterbalance the influence of PCRМ.

The comparison of the level of trust between parties and their leaders helps us understand which leaders are dragging behind them the parties: Vladimir Voronin (PCRМ), Vasile Tarlev (PCRМ), Dorin Chirtoaca (PL) and Dumitru Braghis (PDS) are those that have a level of trust higher than their parties. On the other hand, Oleg Serebrian (PSL), Dumitru Diacov (PD), Iurie Rosca (PPCD) and Marian Lupu (PCRМ) enjoy the same trust as their parties.

the place of PCRМ. On the other hand, some of those who trust the non-Communist parties, do not envisage a clear alternative to the current government and would vote for the current Government knowing that it can influence the situation. Another trait of the Moldovan electorate revealed by the Public Opinion Barometer is that the totalitarian mentality is still deeply rooted, because the majority of the population would prefer the one party system to the multi-party system. It's another aspect explaining probably the high voting intention for PCRМ, even if there is lack of trust in this party.

**The draft of the new political program of PCRМ: how deep is the change?**

In order to justify itself in front of its members, but also in front of the disappointed Communist electorate, PCRМ drafted a new

Parties	Voting intention		Trust in parties		Politicians	Trust in politicians	
	IMAS	IPP	IMAS	IPP		IMAS	IPP
PCRМ	47%	45,4 %	33%	35,9%	Vladimir Voronin	40%	43,6%
					Vasile Tarlev	39%	39,5%
					Marian Lupu	30%	28,7%
					Eugenia Ostapciuc	12%	11%
AMN	13%	14,9%	21%	17,1%	Serafim Urechean	21%	19,7%
PD	10%	6,3%	17%	11,8%	Dumitru Diacov	10%	8,7%
PL	10%	6,3%	13%	12,7%	Dorin Chirtoacă	31%	29%
PDS	3%	1,4%	12%	6,6%	Dumitru Braghis	16%	12,3%
PSL	7%	7,0%	12%	10,1%	Oleg Serebrian	12%	10,1%
PPCD	4,4%	6,7%	11%	8,9%	Iurie Roşca	11%	8,1%

political program. Compared with the program adopted in 2001 just after the victory in the elections, the current one is really revolutionary for the Communists. The new program explains how the new round of privatizations and the initiatives of liberalization of the economy fit with the Communist doctrine concerning the property.

Comparing the three indicators, we observe the following: the non-Communist parties enjoy a greater level of trust, but the voting intention is much lower than the level of trust. In case of PCRМ the trust is around 30%, while the voting intention is over 45%. The low level of trust is hard to explain since in both polls four Communist politicians are mentioned. Two questions are logical in this context: a) Why would some persons vote the Communists, if they do not trust them? and b) Why many voters trust non-Communist parties, but would not vote for them?

Maybe the Communist electorate is disappointed with the performance of their party, but does not see another party to take

No reference is made to the Great October Revolution, nothing about the Soviets, about the common possession of land, not a word about the nostalgia after USSR etc.

Is the new political program meeting the expectations of PCRМ's electorate or it is rather an adjustment of the party documents to the governmental policies? The project of the new political program will replace the structural reform which is badly needed by PCRМ. The program is structured in five parts: a) values b) legacy c) the present times and the new contradictions d) the Moldovan model and e) PCRМ – left party of new kind. The new program proposes new concepts for understanding of the modern reality: the work's proletariat became the proletariat of the

knowledge, private property transformed in social capital, forms of property are now less important than “the forms of social motivation of those managing and possessing the property”, and possession of property becomes a problem that refers to “the administration of the stimulants for development”.

Of course the new draft program mentions that the Communist victory from 2001 “was the first and the only parliamentary victory of the Communists during the whole history of the Communist movement in Europe”, a kind of velvet revolution. Under these circumstances the Moldovan Communists set as their main goal “the transition from an economy based on agriculture and from the bureaucratic-nomenclaturist system to the post-industrial society.” In the PCR program there is no word about the demographic crisis and about the importance of remittances for the functioning of the Moldovan economy. Communists set five goals for their party: the construction of a social state, the creation of a favorable investment climate, the building of a democracy, the increase of Moldova’s competition capacity as a state and the last, the adoption on long term of permanent neutrality and the building of a demilitarized state. In the last section PCR defines itself as a political mass organization that wants to align with the Communist traditions and European socialism enjoying its acceptance in the Party of the European United Left. The new program of PCR means actually a partial Europeanization of the Moldovan Communists.

***Youth organization of an Opposition party launched a Strategy to join European Union***

Though at the official level, there is no long term strategy to join the European Union, the youth organization of the “Alianta Moldova Noastra” party came up with such a Strategy. The Strategy is composed of twelve concrete steps that Moldova should undertake in order to join the Union. According to the document, it is in 2009 that Moldova and EU should mutually denounce the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The twelve steps

mentioned in the document are the exit from the monitoring procedure of the Council of Europe, the reorientation of the Moldovan foreign policy from a neighborhood policy towards a policy of association (2009), the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (2010), lobbying for obtaining the candidate status (2009-2011), implementation of the political and economic Copenhagen criteria (2009-2012), applying officially for membership (2012), starting of the negotiations (2013), the transposing of the *acquis* in the national law (2009-2014), finalizing the negotiations (2015), the signing of the treaty of enlargement (2015) and the ratification of the treaty by the Member States by 2017.

The document does not contain any reference to the status of Moldova in the Commonwealth of Independent States, but this does not diminish its value and can be adopted on the long run as the official strategy of Moldova to join EU.

***Prognosis***

The political interference in the administrative reforms will have as consequence the discrediting of those reforms like it happened with the reforms in the audiovisual. The use of financial means in order to apply pressure on the non-Communist mayors is a wrong approach that will harm in the end the interests of the citizens. The new political program of PCR will not bring major changes in the structure of the party, which will be led in the future months by president Voronin and an old party elite. The opinion polls show that the popularity of the ruling party will not diminish dramatically during the next months. The strengthening of the Opposition will be much more difficult, if the party in government will continue to consolidate its own media trust and will use it openly for discrediting the non-Communist parties.

## ■ Foreign Policy Sector

## BATTLEGROUND MOLDOVA: SOFT POWER VS. HARD POWER

by Sergiu Panainte  
sergiu.panainte@gmail.com

**Overview**

November promised to be calm and quiet as the end of the year was approaching with no major events happening during the first half of the month. Unlike this prediction, the second half of November proved to be loaded with important events which could and would have repercussions for the foreign policy of Moldova.

One of these events is the fact that despite Moldova's official request not to open electoral districts, Russia neglected the official position of Moldovan authorities and announced the opening of 23 election districts in Transnistria for the parliamentary elections to take place on December 2, 2007. By doing this Russia is violating the international law and the laws of the Republic of Moldova.

After the ratification both by the European and Moldovan Parliament of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements, the international conference "Moldova in Europe – Europe in Moldova" is taking place in Chisinau where high representatives from EU institutions and member states, diplomatic circles, Moldovan government and civil society are discussing the actual stage of Moldova-EU relations and further development of this relationship.

On the vector of Moldovan-Romanian relations one can observe no changes as the situation is resembling a stalemate with the Moldovan authorities led by president Voronin continuing to blame Romania for interference in the internal affairs of Moldova, sponsoring the illegal parties and anti-state media, etc. On the other side, the visa problem for Moldovan citizens is not being solved witnessing a first come first served principle which is creating even bigger queues in front of the Romanian Consulate in Chisinau.

Last but not least, new appointments in Moldovan ambassadorial positions have been

made, mentioned back in August this year with former rector of Moldova State University, Gheorghe Rusnac undertaking the role of representing Moldova in Italy and Tatiana Lopicus in Switzerland. While the nomination of Madam Lopicus did not raise too much debates within the public, the appointment of Mr. Rusnac ignited heated discussions about his personality and capability to fulfill such a high responsibility.

***Russian elections and the silence of the lambs***

On December 2, 2007 the elections for the Russian Parliament will be held. The pro-presidential party "Edinaya Rossiya" is leading in the polls, a thing which could be expected from the beginning as the presidential administration is detaining the administrative resources to advertise party's program and figures. Moreover, Putin's figure as a national leader is playing a key role for the image of the party with a repressed opposition who is being constrained and decimated. What does this mean for Moldova and the Transnistrian resolution?

First of all with "Edinaya Rossiya" coming into power the current course of internal and foreign policy will be preserved and further enforced. Russia will pursue its "rebirth" and return to the "big politics" as well as playing a leading role in world affairs. As the contention with the EU for Russian "near abroad" is not solved yet, it is almost sure that Russia will not soften its approach to Transnistria and the resolution of frozen conflicts in its proximity. Therefore, no breakthrough on this issue could be forecasted. Moreover, despite the official request from Moldovan authorities to refrain from opening electoral districts in Transnistria, Russia decided to do its way and to defy this restriction. 23 of these districts will be opened in the breakaway

region, besides the legal one in the building of the Russian Embassy in Chisinau. Thus, Russia is once again violating the international law and internal laws of Moldova, which actually became a habit for it and is not surprising anybody.

Since Chisinau has no control over Transnistria it cannot do anything about it and will have to stay quiet as the lambs before the slaughter. This is also true for the international community who did not take any stance on this issue and no warning statements in the address of Russia have been made. This means nothing else than a tacit approval of Russian unlawful actions. Again the Russian "bear" proves to be too scary for the Western contenders and so far it is gaining ground for future maneuvers both in Moldova and elsewhere.

### ***EU and the soft power strategy***

More and more Moldova is depicted as a battleground between Russian interests backed by its hard power versus EU interests and soft power application. Believe it or not, it seems to be true because as mentioned in other bulletins Russia beholds the levers to control Moldova energetically, politically and economically. Consequently it applies hard power to maintain that control through the price for the natural gas, prohibitions for Moldovan export, political pressure on the elites and government, plus control over Tiraspol administration.

Conversely, the EU has a softer approach and even if this type of approach can render results in the long run, in the short run it is detrimental. This is the argument often used by the Moldovan authorities to convince Brussels to take a more active stance in the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict and to credit Moldova with European perspectives for integration, however so far without any results.

The EU has adopted the soft power approach long ago and will not change it for the sake of Moldova or Ukraine or Georgia. The primary requirement for the target countries is to stick to the norms and values the EU shares and to be responsive to the request of proceeding to the implementation of reforms in order to fulfill the

political, economical and administrative criteria for integration. Respectively, this takes time and the benefits for complying can be felt as well in time. For instance for the Central and Eastern European countries it took up to 14 or 17 years to integrate, time when they reformed the whole socialist/communist system of government and planned economy to a democratic rule and market economy. Instead, they are now full members of EU and NATO with developed economies and stable political systems.

This soft power strategy consists of conditionality and socialization tools as mentioned so many times in the previous bulletins. However, sometimes the stakes and the incentives proposed by the EU prove not to be high enough to produce the change or to make the elites to adopt this change as it can result in losing the electorate and consequently the power. That is the case with the Communist party as well which is mimicking the implementation of reforms in exchange for the carrots it gets, but is not ready to proceed to full scale reforms as it will alter the whole balance of power between the political parties in Moldova. With more transparency and accountability they will surely lose support as the electorate is maturing and will not let itself fooled by empty promises. Therefore, the soft power strategy with regard to Moldova is rendering little result with no prospect of advancing the reforms with a speedier pace. Of course, it does not mean that given this "failure" of soft power strategy for "conquering" Moldova the EU has to offer everything to Moldova without any conditionality. However, to be successful in the battle with Russia, the EU should be more results-oriented and ready to offer more benefits to Moldova.

One could already put to the EU basket a white ball for the Visa Facilitation Agreement. Another one would be for the asymmetrical trade preferences to be granted to Moldova. Some other would be to increase the level of cooperation on issues related to education, tourism, etc. Nevertheless, the political and economic aspects of this cooperation are what

matters the most. A politically and economically “healthy” Moldova is in the interest of EU, which is actually stated in the European Neighborhood Policy. Hence, it would be good to start implementing it properly for the mutual benefit of the target countries as well as the soft power Europe.

### ***The troublesome axe Bucharest – Chisinau***

The course of the Moldovan-Romanian relations is following a downward trend without any signs of improvement. It became already a normal state of affairs to have tough declarations towards the western neighbor on behalf of president Voronin. This month was no exception with the president continuing his tirade about Romania sponsoring illegal parties and anti-state media.

Romanian authorities do not respond anymore to these groundless accusations probably being sick and tired of them. However, Bucharest is indicted for lack of vision in the relationship with Chisinau and no clear strategy for approaching the relations with its direct neighbor. Some politicians from Brussels pointed the finger at Bucharest for not having still a Border and Basic Agreement with Moldova, which should be the first step to a fruitful relationship. So far this is true.

The issue of signing this agreement is painful and lasting from 1994. With some progress in 2000 a draft document was initiated only to be rejected later on when the Communists came into power. However, the document proposed by the Communists to be signed makes referrals to the Paris Treaty of 1947, a thing which cannot be accepted by the Romanian government.

Besides that, the problems exist at the social and identity level with the authorities’ denial of the Romanian language in Moldova as well as of Romanian identity of the population living in Moldova.

The only possibility to overcome the crisis in the Moldovan-Romanian relations is to have a change of generations within the political elites on both banks of Prut when new people would come with new ideas for old problems.

### ***Who Is Representing Moldova Abroad? – Follow Up***

In one of the previous numbers of the PSS the topic of who is representing Moldova abroad has been approached. The reason for bringing back into discussion this issue is the recent appointment of Gheorghe Rusnac as Moldovan Ambassador to Italy.

Mr. Rusnac was serving as rector of Moldova State University (MSU) for already 14 years, a position which offers a lot of privileges and probably income since the university due to budget cuts had to introduce contracted places for students with the proportion of 5 to 95 per cent between budgetary and contracted students, a proportion which raised dramatically in the last 10 years.

Having such a “warm” position what else could Mr. Rusnac wish for as he all the time has been reelected in rector position? One clue could be the recent draft law which will give the prerogative of appointing the rectors to the President in which case the “independent” Rusnac could lose his position. There is a likelihood that Rusnac traded off his “leave” from MSU for an ambassadorial mandate, instead leaving his position to be grabbed by Communists who were hunting this spot long ago. In such a way, both Rusnac and the Communists are winning, at least temporarily, since Rusnac always can be removed when Voronin would wish to do so. Who is losing? – Moldovan diplomacy and country’s image abroad as well as Moldovan citizens working in Italy.

The reason is that the personality of Mr. Rusnac is a controversial one. His PhD in History and Political Sciences does not make him fit for the position of an ambassador yet. Whatever the reasons behind this appointment it is absolutely sure that the relation with Italy will not be enhanced with Rusnac being ambassador. More than that, Moldova is discrediting itself with such people in key positions representing our country abroad. Again, the position of ambassador in Moldova is profaned and used as a tool to get rid of inconvenient people or as trade offs for certain services paid to the party in

power. One could mention also Rusnac backing the Communist candidate for Chisinau's mayor position in the local elections of June 2007. With such an external diplomatic corps Moldova cannot claim high results from its diplomacy. It is time to have skilled and well educated people for improving the external image of the country.

### **Prognosis**

For the last month of the year several events represent a high interest and intensity for the foreign policy of Moldova. First of all this is the outcome of the parliamentary elections in Russia. The results are more or less predictable with the pro-presidential party on top of the electoral campaign. However it would be interesting to see the new structure and the parties which will form the new Duma.

Another expected event according to some declarations is the signing of the Basic treaty between Moldova and Romania and breaking the stalemate in the Moldovan-Romanian relations. It is hard to believe that this document will be signed till the end of the year, however it would be a step ahead to solve this problem and go further on to improve the neighborly relations.

Also it is anticipated that the Romanian Consulate will have another building with increased capacity to process about 600 to 700 requests for visa per day. However it has to be determined the procedure of running the process since the first come-first served principle is not working properly. It was stated in the media the possibility for opening a call center but this has to be worked out in the nearest future.

---

## ■ Security Policy Sector

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN THREATS TO MOLDOVA'S SECURITY?

by Ion Marandici  
ionmarandici@gmail.com

#### **Summary**

The new chief of the intelligence services is a former young presidential advisor. Reform of the security sector is needed, but it is not clear what Resetnicov's mission is. New declarations about Romania show that Communists have an "obsession about Romania". At the same time, the Russian Federation ignores the territorial integrity of Moldova and the reaction on behalf of the authorities is rather late and inadequate. Under these circumstances, Communists promote further the neutrality of the state and plan to build a demilitarized state.

#### **Security and Information Service has exclusive rights to tap**

The Security and Information Service (SIS) will be lead by the former presidential adviser, Artur Resetnicov, proposed by the President of RM for the office of Director of SIS. Previously,

SIS was lead by Ion Ursu, general of division. Probably as a present, he was offered the post of Moldovan Ambassador in Greece. It is a common practice in Republic of Moldova that those who bring services to the Communist government are rewarded with an Ambassador office: the same was the case with rector of the Moldova State University, Gheorghe Rusnac and Valerian Cristea former vice-prime-minister. Unlike Ursu, the new Chief of the Secret Services is a young person close to President Vladimir Voronin. At the 2001 election, Resetnicov was representing the PCRM at the Central Electoral Commission and after that he was for several years presidential adviser on legal affairs.

After he was approved in office by the Parliament the risks of political interference in the security sector have augmented. In the same session, the Parliament approved legislative changes through which SIS gained the exclusive right of tapping phone conversations. For sure the

party in government will not resist the temptation to use SIS in order to attain its political goals. It is presumed that previously four institutions were misusing this right: Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Center for Combating Corruption and Economic Crimes, SIS and General Prosecutor's Office. The official reason for this change is the lack of financial resources to buy listening devices for all four institutions. The tapping of the conversations is a usual practice in the Moldovan judicial system. From the experience of the lawyers it is clear the judges do not refuse the requests of tapping coming from the different state institutions. SIS is not even informing the persons which have been under surveillance in case the allegations prove false. Even if until now SIS was not involved in scandals concerning tapping, the experts argue that practically it is very difficult to prove that such surveillance took place. The integrity of the SIS collaborators should be the guarantee that these persons will not disclose the information obtained. But are SIS employees reliable?

The vice-director of the Direction of Fraud Investigations from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Oleg Putuntica announced in a press conference that together with the police authorities from Spain, Italy and Germany was documented the activity of a criminal international organization specialized in illegal migration and forging of Romanian passports and other identity documents. The activity of the group was lead by Lydia Birladean, a former SIS employee, currently retired. The investigators assume that the former SIS staff member had close connections with some of the Russian secret services employees that helped her and facilitated against a fee the transit of Moldovan citizen with forged documents through the VIP area of the Russian airports avoiding any border and customs controls. Most curious is the fact that the quality of the forged documents was so good that Italian police could not prove that the documents were forged, even if they were informed of the fact. The case of the former SIS employee is significant. Low salaries may determine some of the SIS employees to misuse the information with a confidential character in order to serve their own interests or in order to obtain a profit. But more significant is the case of the former SIS Director, Valeriu Pasat, which

“sought asylum” in Russian Federation after his release. There are sufficient reasons to presume that during the time he was leading the Moldovan intelligence services, Pasat served the interests of the Russian Federation instead of defending the interests of Republic of Moldova.

These developments alarm us and we ask ourselves, how could be limited the influence of the politics in the activity of SIS. Even if in the Moldovan Parliament there is a Committee for National Security, Defense and Public Order that should exert a parliamentary control upon intelligence services, its activity is inefficient. The appointment of a person close to the president of Republic of Moldova could transform SIS in an institution for oppressing the political opposition. It is true that the appointment of presidential advisers in the offices of chiefs of intelligence services is a practice widespread in other states, too, but in the political context of Republic of Moldova, it would have been more fair the appointment of an independent person or of an insider. The press draws the attention to the fact that the Law regarding the statute of the Officer for Information and Security stipulates that the future employees will be tested at the lie detector. Did the new Director of this institution already pass that test and in that case who addressed the questions?

Another test for the Moldovan public opinion was the case of Mihai Contiu, Romanian citizen, which unveiled in the “Moldova Suverana” newspaper details about his activity as an agent of the Romanian External Information Service. The lack of any official reactions in Chisinau and Bucharest, after these confessions is very suspect and gives the impression of a scenario elaborated by the local intelligence services. It is very plausible that Contiu's confession, who accused the interference of Romanian intelligence services in the domestic affairs of Moldova to be just a part of a large-scale campaign of denigration of Romania. On the other hand, such revelations should have triggered a lot of discussions in the press. However the press attacked by Contiu has chosen the silence and ignored his case.

***Romania or Russian Federation: which of them is a threat?***

If Romania is constantly present in President's discourses, the Communists forget to adopt

clear stances towards the abuses of the Russian Federation on Moldovan territory. On 2nd of December the Russian parliamentary elections took place. The Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed the opening of one voting section at the Russian Federation Embassy. However, Russia decided unilaterally to open 24 polling section in the separatist region of Transnistria. The repeated requests from behalf of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration were ignored. This decision of the Russian authorities was a clear infringement on Moldova's feeble sovereignty. However the opening of the 24 polling sections on the left side of the Nistru remained without an adequate response on behalf of Chisinau. The Moldovan authorities reacted late and did not undertake any practical measures to impede the opening of those sections. The only decisive reaction was that of a few non-Governmental organizations.

How do these actions fit in the general framework of confidence building measures policy initiated by President Vladimir Voronin earlier this year? The proposed measures were deemed as good steps towards conflict resolution by all the parties involved in the negotiations except Russian Federation. The organizing of Russian elections in the separatist region of Transnistria is a clear sign of Russia's intentions with regard to possible solutions. It is also a clear sign for the Western politicians who still dream that Russian influence in the breakaway Transnistria is diminishing. Moreover, opening voting sections in the separatist region without the permission of the Moldovan government shows that Russia contrary to all the previous declarations does not respect the territorial integrity of the Moldovan state. The rumors and the declarations of the Moldovan president after the talks with numerous Russian officials were encouraging; still the actions of Russian Federation prove the contrary. It seems the talks between Russia and Moldova were in vain since Russia does not regard Moldova as an equal partner. For comparison it should be mentioned that in Estonia were opened three voting sections. Under these circumstances the discussions about permanent neutrality and the demilitarization of the Moldovan state are very weird.

### ***NATO, permanent neutrality and demilitarization on Communists' agenda***

At present, Moldova upholds a policy of rapprochement towards NATO. The country is participating in the Partnership for Peace Programme since 1994. For the first time, in September 2006, in Moldova were organized two exercises in the framework of the Partnership for Peace Program – Cooperative Longbow 06 and Cooperative Lancer 06. In 2007, the multinational exercise Medceur-2007 took place at the Bulboaca training facility, aiming to improve the medical response in a crisis situation. A unique project that was largely supported by NATO's Science for Peace Programme concerns the destruction of pesticides.

The Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) Republic of Moldova - NATO was approved by the Government in July 2006. Launched at the November 2002 NATO Prague Summit, IPAPs are open to those countries that have the necessary political will and ability to deepen their relationship with NATO. The NATO-Moldova IPAP has been fully harmonized with the EU-Moldova Action Plan to ensure complementarities and avoid overlap. Neutrality is mentioned twice in the IPAP. First, it is stated clearly in the document that the implementation of the IPAP does not mean that Moldova aims to join NATO, but only strives to reform the military and security sectors. A special emphasis is put on Moldova's political cooperation with the other neutral partner states. In addition to Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Kazakhstan have also signed IPAPs with the Alliance. However the implementation of the IPAP is rather unsatisfactory, the basic security documents - the National Strategic Review and the National Security Strategy - were not yet adopted. Press reported that the Supreme Security Council has excluded from the National Security Strategy the major references to NATO. The fear to adhere to any military bloc is present also in the draft of the new PCRPM program, where it is stated that on long term, Communists shall plead for the full demilitarization of the country, while intensifying their efforts to be internationally recognized as a permanent neutral country. Military blocks are deemed by the party in Government as outdated. It seems that population favors neutrality and in case

of a referendum of NATO only 23% would support Moldova joining it, while 41% would be against. This is the first time that the majority of population would vote against Moldova joining NATO.

The benefits of permanent neutrality for Moldova are not obvious, since there was no study about that problem. Moldova's neutrality cannot be assessed today, since Russian troops were always stationed on Moldovan soil. This means actually, that Moldova never was a neutral country. Maintaining the permanent neutrality in the Moldovan context can prove a more expensive option than joining a strong military alliance, which would surely provide more security for the Moldovan citizens. Central European states and some Eastern European states defined Euro-Atlantic integration as their national interest, because this was responding to their need for more security. However, as long the Communist party stays in power, it is clear that neutrality will be one of the cornerstones of their foreign policy.

The initiative of demilitarization is highly suspect under the current circumstances. Some sources state that the military force of the separatist Transnistria is equal or even stronger

than Moldovan army. In case of an attack, it is not sure that the Chisinau will resist. The separatist leadership received the declaration on demilitarization very cold. There should be a mutual commitment to demilitarization, but after Moldova made the first step, the other side did not follow.

### **Prognosis**

The intelligence services will become sooner or later an instrument of control in the hands of Communists party. The Security and Information Service will become more powerful, hence the importance of its independence.

Unilateral demilitarization of Moldova will bring no progress in the solution of the Transnistrian conflict, unless this step is undertaken also by the Transnistrian region. Still, the opening of the 24 polling stations shows the disrespectful Russian attitude towards the territorial integrity of Republic of Moldova. It also shows that Russian Federation does not support the confidence-building measures initiated by Moldova and that during the talks with the Moldovan president, there was no agreement achieved on the settlement of the conflict. The status quo is unlikely to change during the next months.

---

---

The Bulletin is a bilingual monthly publication aiming to provide analysis on various elements of domestic and foreign policy, as well as on some issues of special interest for Moldova.

Political and Security Statewatch authors: Ion Marandici, Sergiu Panainte and Dumitru Mînzărari.

In order to subscribe to the distribution list of Political and Security Statewatch bulletin, please contact us by e-mail: [ghenadie.mocanu@viitorul.org](mailto:ghenadie.mocanu@viitorul.org).

Coordination and distribution of the bulletin: Ghenadie Mocanu.

#### **Contacts:**

Chisinau, 10/1, Iacob Hincu Str., 2009 MD, Republic of Moldova

Tel/fax: (+ 373/22) 21 09 32; 21.36.32; 22.71.30

E-mail: [idis\\_viitorul@mdl.net](mailto:idis_viitorul@mdl.net)

Web: [www.viitorul.org](http://www.viitorul.org)



The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDSI) “Viitorul” is a research, education and outreach organization which activates in the field of economic analysis, governance, law, political sciences, strategic and organizational science. It was set up in June 1993 in Moldova as a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, non-political entity.

The IDSI’s mission is to contribute to the growth of independent thinking environment in Moldova and in other emerging democracies; to contribute to the strengthening of the local and regional governments; to assist the expansion of the civil society in which the citizens act together to express their own interests, to exchange information and to strive for mutual goals and influence government.

IDSI is also a common platform that brings together young intellectuals who are concerned with the models of transition towards the free market and the open society. IDSI helps them to contribute with their energies, values and virtues, providing its logistic, moral and intellectual support and advices them regarding their future projects and initiatives. Consistent with this mission, IDSI has forged several linkages between the academic and policy-making environments, generating policy analysis and recommendations for various areas of public interest, creating and disseminating of the best practices, good governance and economic analysis.