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Daily summary: Tuesday, November 30

CHIȘINĂU (Imedia) -

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) meets to come up with an offer to govern together with the Democratic Party (DP) and the Liberal Party (LP).

„We will negotiate with our alliance colleagues. We will not change our coalition partners. The LDP will not, however, accept blackmail and conditions. /.../ Before we move on to distributing seats we need to set up principles according to which the next alliance will function,” LDP head Vlad Filat says.

Although a meeting between the three party leaders was initially scheduled for November 29, it was postponed for December 1 after Mr. Filat said he needed to speak to Chisinau's foreign partners, including the European People's Party and foreign ambassadors.

The LDP head also announced he would hold talks with the Party of Communists (PC). „I am interested in their viewpoint on the situation in Moldova,” Mr. Filat noted.

The P.M. was optimistic about being able to convince the Communists to vote for the President. The LP, the LDP, and the DP hold 59 seats in the new Parliament. They need 61 to elect a head of state.

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DP honorary head Dumitru Diacov tells Russian daily Nezavisimaia Gazeta that negotiations to create a new governing coalition will begin after the Communists and the Liberal Democrats present a viewpoint. „We will wait for their proposals, and then we will negotiate. There are no happy options, so we will pick the least of two evils,” Mr. Diacov noted.

He added that „the old governing alliance no longer exists, and the new one will be created from scratch. We have no obligation toward each other, which is why we will negotiate separately.”

Nezavisimaia Gazeta says that Mr. Diacov rejected rumors that the DP could create an alliance with the Communists.

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The Party of Communists (PC) says that it has records of a number of irregularities during the November 28 vote.

„Authorities used various methods that were part of a system. There are a lot of cases where people were included in additional lists illegally, without presenting a voting certificate or evidence of their residence. Most of the ballots that were spoiled belonged to the PC. There were votes without a stamp on the ballot, and people were being asked if they wanted a stamp or not. Students from Romania were brought and driven around to vote multiple times,” says Communist M.P. Sergiu Sirbu.

LDP head and P.M. Vlad Filat says that if the Communists have evidence, they should go to a court of law.

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Balti mayor Vasili Panciuk, a Communist M.P., expresses his hope that the parties of the Alliance for European Integration (AEI) and the Party of Communists (PC) find ways to cooperate. Mr. Panciuk tells DECA-press that he would like to see an efficient parliament. He stresses that „the people have made the choice, and now it is no longer important to look at election results, but to find a compromise among politicians.”

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„The United States congratulate the Moldovan people on transparent and impartial elections, considered by international observers to be generally in accordance with the international standards of free and fair elections,” says a press release from the U.S. Embassy to Chisinau.

„Now it is important for political leaders in Moldova to work together to form a new Government and to pick a President to solve the problems facing them,” the release adds.

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European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton and European Commission for Expansion and Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fule sign a common statement saluting „the conduct of legislative elections in Moldova in accordance with a majority of international standards.”

„We would like to appeal to every political force with access in Parliament to engage in open and constructive dialogue to form a governing coalition and elect a President, and together enforce priority reforms that are necessary for the future of the country,” the statement adds.

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Will the election results affect Moldova's foreign policy?

CHIȘINĂU (Imedia) – Four parties won seats during the November 28 election. The Party of Communists garnered 39.29 percent of the vote and 42 seats, followed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP, 29.38 percent, 32 seats), the Democratic Party (12.72 percent, 15 seats), and the Liberal Party (9.96 percent, 12 seats).

No party has enough seats to form a cabinet by itself (52) or to elect a President (61).

PC head Vladimir Voronin said on November 29 that he is ready to form a coalition with either the DP or the LDP.

LDP head Vlad Filat and LP head Mihai Ghimpu said they would not form an alliance with the Communists.

DP honorary head Dumitru Diacov noted that a DP-LDP alliance would be “nicer” than one with the Communists, while DP head Marian Lupu wants a “larger coalition” that would include every legislative faction. Deputy DP head Valeriu Lazar, on the other hand, stressed that the DP would be open for a coalition with the PC, the LDP, or the LP, and that the party would accept whatever offer was more attractive.

Imedia spoke with a few analysts about whether the results of the election will affect the country's foreign policy.

Commentary:

Igor Botan: *I don't see who would dare oppose closer ties to the European Union*

Igor Botan, executive director of the Association for Participatory Democracy, says that the November 28 elections will not affect Moldova's European aspirations.

„Can Moldova give up on the financial, economic, and political support of the European Union? Chisinau survived this year because of the EU's direct support. I don't see how a coalition that will come to power will give up on this support. The problem that does exist is this: the new coalition has to be conscious of the fact that, if it will have a four-year mandate, it will be able to bring Moldova to the EU's doorstep. That is, it could make a leap, considering the goodwill Brussels has showed in the last year. If leaders do their homework and successfully use the money the EU and other development partners have decided to give Moldova, I think the country will be in a very good situation. So I don't see who would dare oppose closer ties to the European Union. That would be political suicide,” Mr. Botan suggests.

He explains that the most likely coalition will probably be a recreation of the Alliance for European Integration (AEI). An alliance between the PC and the DP is the second most likely outcome, Mr. Botan predicts.

The political analyst is certain that a President will be elected this time.

„There are several possibilities to solve the problem of electing a head of state. It is too early to talk about who will get the job, and whether it will be a politician or a neutral person. It is a certainty that the Presidency will be negotiated along with all the other issues,” Mr. Botan concludes.

Victor Chirila: *There is a risk for Moldova's European path to be affected*

Victor Chirila, executive director of the Foreign Policy Association, says that there is a risk for Moldova's European path to be affected after November 28.

„It all depends on what sort of coalition will govern Moldova after elections. If the DP created an alliance with the PC, we will definitely see a reorganization of foreign policy objectives. European integration will undoubtedly remain a priority, but we will also see a more nuanced balance between the Eastern and the Western dimensions of foreign policy. When I say Eastern dimension, I am particularly referring to ties with the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia primarily. In this case, we would definitely see attempts to form a strategic partnership with Russia, like the DP and the PC want.

It is not yet clear what this strategic partnership would mean, but Russia would gain more influence over events in Moldova and over decision-making in foreign or domestic policy.

There is also a possibility that an alliance with the PC will lead to a worsening of democratic quality. It is not certain that the PC has changed after a year of opposition and has understood that they need a real compromise on Moldova's future. I am also afraid that an alliance with the PC would cause losses for the DP in the medium- and long-term, which could be visible during the local elections of 2011.

If the AEI is recreated, the foreign policy formulated last year will continue unchanged. Moreover, I think there will be more interest from the EU to help the Alliance consolidate internally and to make visible progress externally, especially in ties with Brussels, so that these are visible domestically," Mr. Chirila suggests.

„At the same time, two of the recreated AEI members will show the need for a strategic and pragmatic relationship with Russia. That is not accidental. The elections have shown that Moldovan society is divided along geopolitical criteria and that these criteria cannot be overcome if one camp or another has gains. A confrontation between these camps would lead to major instability in Moldova with a profoundly negative impact on the country's foreign policy. That is why I think the new AEI will try to have a normal and predictable dialogue with Russia that would bring long-term political stability at the domestic level, since Russia has enough tools to influence decision-making in Chisinau, to create social tensions a new AEI would not be able to control fully, and to compromise the alliance's reform agenda. So Chisinau will need a balance in ties with Brussels and Moscow, which should not, however, endanger the country's main objective of joining the EU," Mr. Chirila concludes.

Anatol Taranu: *In general, these elections will not affect Moldova's European path*

„In general these elections will not affect Moldova's European path. They have largely confirmed the pro-European direction of the country. But if the PC comes back to power, in one form or another, the situation will become more problematic. Still, if the old coalition is recreated, our European path will not only be preserved, but will fortify," says Anatol Taranu, a political commentator.

„The recreation of the AEI by the three parties would be the most natural coalition. This is what the majority of Moldovans voted for. Any other coalition would be unnatural and would go against the largest part of society because it would ignore the will of the people. The politicians who will accept something else will have to suffer the consequences," Mr. Taranu stresses.

He notes that he is optimistic about Parliament's ability to elect a new head of state.

„I think there is a 90-percent probability that the head of state will be elected. I think that this time they will manage to find a solution. But we must not exclude the possibility, which is very small, that we will have early elections again. The president could be either a politician or someone neutral," Mr. Taranu concludes.

File:

The LDP held an internal meeting on November 30 to come up with offers to the DP and the LP for the creation of a new alliance.

„We will hold negotiations with out alliance colleagues. We will not change our coalition partners. The LDP will not accept blackmail and conditions. /.../ Before moving to distributing positions, we have to set up the principles according to which the next alliance will function,” LDP head Vlad Filat said.

Mr. Filat noted that he was not ready to meet with DP and LP heads on Tuesday, November 29, despite the fact that he announced he would. The P.M. explained that he needs to speak with Chisinau's foreign partners, including the European People's Party and ambassadors, before he speaks with Marian Lupu and Mihai Ghimpu.

The Filat-Lupu-Ghimpu meeting could take place on Wednesday, December 1.

The LDP head added that he would hold talks with the PC, as well. „I am really interested in their viewpoint on the situation in Moldova,” Mr. Filat told the press.

The P.M. was optimistic about the possibility of getting two Communist votes to elect the head of state.

DP honorary head Dumitru Diacov told Russian newspaper Nezavisimaia Gazeta on November 30 that negotiations to create a ruling coalition will begin after both the Communists and the Liberal Democrats express a viewpoint. „We will wait for their proposals, and then we will negotiate. There are no happy options, so we will pick the least of two evils,” Mr. Diacov suggested.

He stressed that „the old ruling alliance no longer exists, and the new one will be created from scratch. We have no obligations toward each other, so we will negotiate separately,” Mr. Diacov explained.

The Russian paper wrote that Mr. Diacov rejected statements that the DP could form an alliance with the Communists.

LP head Mihai Ghimpu has pleaded for the recreation of the Alliance by the three non-Communist parties. The current coalition includes the LP, the DP, the LDP, and the Moldova Noastra [Our Moldova] Alliance (MNA). MNA did not manage to cross the threshold on November 28.

Profile:

Igor Botan (b. April 15, 1960) has been head of the Association for Participatory Democracy since 1999. He is one of the most well-known political commentators in Moldova and is specialized in electoral systems.

He holds a degree in physics from the State University of Moldova and a Ph.D. in physics and mathematics.

Between 1982 and 1992, Mr. Botan worked as an engineer. Between 1992 and 1994, he was a consultant for the Moldovan presidency's political analysis department. Between 1994 and 2001, Mr. Botan was senior coordinator with IFES Moldova.

Between 2000 and 2008, Mr. Botan was a political analyst and commentator with Radio Free Europe, BBC World Service, and the Economist Intelligence Unit. He is currently a political commentator with PublikaTV.

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Victor Chirila (b. August 12, 1971) is executive director of the Foreign Policy Association.

He holds a degree from the A. I. Cuza University (1994, Iasi, Romania) and a graduate degree from the National School for Political Studies and Public Administration (1994-1996, Bucharest, Romania).

Mr. Chirila has worked with the Foreign Affairs Ministry since 1996. He was part of the Moldovan Embassy in Washington, D.C., and deputy head of the Europe and North America and International Economic Ties departments between 2004 and 2006.

Between 2006 and 2007, Mr. Chirila pursued an M.A. in European Public Policy from the University of Edinburgh (the U.K.).

He has been with the Foreign Policy Association since August 2007.

Mr. Chirila is an expert on political topics and European integration.

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Anatol Taranu (October 19, 1951) is a Ph.D. in history and a former M.P. (1990-1993; 2005-2009). He currently works for the History, State and Law Institute at the Moldovan Academy.

Mr. Taranu is a political commentator for JurnalTV. He is also a very popular presence in other mass media, including the public TV station, Radio Free Europe, and others.

Between 1993 and 1994, Mr. Taranu was Moldova's Ambassador to Moscow. Between 1997 and 1998, he was a special missions advisor for the Moldovan President, as well as head of Chisinau's expert group during negotiations with Tiraspol on the resolution of the Transnistrian conflict.

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