

# MOLDOVA - WATCHLIST

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## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION<sup>1</sup>

Since declaring independence in 1991, Moldova has been one of the more pluralistic post-Soviet states. Though it currently leans democratic, much remains to be done in the areas of media independence, reform of law enforcement agencies, and local democratic governance. The governing PCM (Communist) party remains in office, though with a significantly smaller majority than it had prior to the 2005 elections. This has opened the way for a more balanced political system in which the opposition and civil society have a greater role to play. In fact, some of the government's centralizing tendencies are being reversed under pressure from external/internal coalitions of civil society groups, opposition parties, and Moldova's Western partners. The incumbent president, Vladimir Voronin, was reelected in 2005 with a large majority created with the support of certain opposition parties. In return, the ruling Communist Party promised to carry out a number of reforms that were requested by the opposition. These post-electoral reforms include changes to the electoral code and the composition of the Central Election Commission to increase its independence from the ruling party.

There are a number of skilled and potentially successful NGOs whose activity is constrained by lack of resources. Thus, the priority in civil society development efforts in Moldova is to invest in capacity building and institutional development. In terms of media, the state has been slowly withdrawing from controlling the media. The Voronin reelection agreement between the PCM and some opposition parties had a positive, albeit marginal, impact on media independence. In 2005 the government renounced ownership of its two previously official national newspapers. However, the transformation of the public broadcasting company Teleradio Moldova into a genuinely independent media and the transformation of the media watchdog Broadcasting Coordination Council into a genuinely independent institution remain important.

## MOST RECENT TRENDS

Local government is highly inefficient. There is a backlog of over 40,000 pending court decisions. Other problems affect the efficiency of the Moldovan judiciary system, such as a lack of sufficient courtrooms and computer services. With the help of the EU, Moldova has been engaged throughout 2005 and 2006 in an extensive reform of its judicial system. The Moldovan Parliament has revised the laws of judiciary organization to reform the system of appointments and dismissals of members of the judiciary. The main goal has been to make the judicial system more independent from political and economic influence. Although the reform process needs to be sustained and adequate funds made available, the Moldovan government has taken encouraging steps toward reform.

Interference with the free media remains a problem. A leading independent radio station, Radio C, was closed in December 2006 with the excuse of a bomb threat evacuation. The state regulator has since claimed that the station needs to sign a new contract with it. There are fears that the government may be trying to delay the station's re-opening until its radio license expires.

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<sup>1</sup> Principal author: Freedom House

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Finally, the issue of Transdnistr remains highly contentious; the breakaway region's holding of a referendum on independence and Russia's continued pressure on the Moldovan economy lead to a situation where economic and political volatility could quickly spiral downward.

### STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

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World Bank Institute Governance Indicators 2005	Score	Key
Voice and Accountability	32.4	Range 0-100 (Lower value indicates weak voice and accountability; higher value indicates strong voice and account)
Political Stability and Absence of Violence	27.8	Range 0-100 (Lower value indicates weak political stability and high violence; higher value indicates opposite)
Government Effectiveness	27.8	Range 0-100 (Lower value indicates weak government effectiveness; higher value indicates strong gov. effectiveness)
Regulatory Quality	38.1	Range 0-100 (Lower value indicates weak regulatory quality; higher value indicates strong regulatory quality)
Rule of Law	35.3	Range 0-100 (Lower value indicates weak rule of law; higher value indicates strong rule of law)
Control of Corruption	27.1	Range 0-100 (Lower value indicates weak control of corruption; higher value indicates strong control of corruption)

Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2007	Score	Key
Political Rights	3	Range 1-7 (Lower value indicates good system of political rights; higher value indicates bad system political rights)
Civil Liberties	4	Range 1-7 (Lower value indicates good system of civil liberties; higher value indicates bad system civil liberties)
Status	PF	3 Categories: F (Free); PF (Partly Free); NF (Not Free)

Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006	Score	Key
Stateness	6.5	Range 0-10 (Lower value indicates negative democratic development; higher value indicates positive democratic development)
Political Participation	6.8	
Rule of Law	4.8	
Stability of Democratic Institutions	4.5	
Political and Social Integration	4.5	

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Total Score Political Transformation	5.40	Range 0-10 (Lower value indicates negative democratic development; higher value indicates positive democratic development) / Arrow shows trend in democratic development (↑Improved; ↓Worsened)
Total Score Political Management	3.50	Range 0-10 (Lower value indicates lower quality of political management; higher value indicates higher quality of political management)

Corruption Perceptions Index 2006	Moldova Score	Key
Total Score	3.2	Range 0-10 (lower value indicates high corruption; higher value indicates lower values of corruption)