



# IFES Moldova Newsletter

Welcome  
to the third IFES  
Moldova Newsletter!

We hope you enjoy reading  
about our work improving  
democracy and elections in  
Moldova.

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## Who we are

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) envisions a world in which strong democratic institutions empower citizens to have a voice in the way they are governed.

IFES is assisting Moldova's Central Election Commission (CEC) to effectively manage the electoral system and increase citizen understanding and participation. IFES' efforts are focused on improving voter registration procedures, strengthening mechanisms for voter registration, building capacity of elections officials, developing the training capacity of the CEC and providing targeted voter education initiatives.

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August 2012

Dear partners and friends of IFES Moldova:

The first part of this year has seen us focus our work with the Central Election Commission (CEC) on two very important areas: political/campaign finance reform and improving the voter list. Voter list improvement activities centered on local public authorities in Moldova and how they interact with and provide data to the CEC.

Two articles in this newsletter highlight those efforts. Political finance reform was dominated by the process of working with the CEC political finance working group to develop a bill for parliament to make political financing more transparent and accountable. In this newsletter we recap that process, as well as a Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) training that introduced 29 people to the principles of political finance.

In this issue, we begin a new feature: interviews with people of the CEC. We want to hear from them on how their lives have changed, if at all, during IFES' engagement with the organization. This time we feature CEC Chief of Staff Mariana Musteata. We hope you'll enjoy meeting the people we work with.

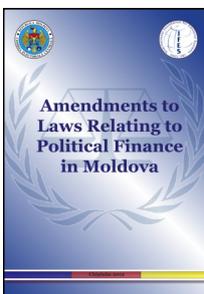
Sincerely,  
Steven Gray

Handwritten signature of Steven Gray in black ink.

IFES Moldova Country Director



Above: Training on voter lists for LPA secretaries and the Guideline for LPAs.  
February 2012  
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil



Below: Representatives of international organizations and diplomatic corps during a briefing explaining amendments proposed to parliament.  
June 2012, Chisinau  
Photo credit: UNDP/Elena Verdeș



## LPA Voter List Improvement Trainings

For the first time, the CEC, in cooperation with IFES, conducted trainings for local public authority (LPA) secretaries in all 35 rayon centers. The goal of the February 2012 seminars was to provide LPA secretaries information on how they can eliminate obvious errors in their voter lists. They addressed flaws that were identified during a database audit of all voter lists and demonstrated the process LPAs should follow to compile, update and transmit voter lists to the CEC.

The trainings also introduced Microsoft Excel macros developed by the CEC Information Technology department to find repetitions and formatting errors within voter lists. LPA secretaries also received the *Local Public Administration's Guidelines for Preparation/Update of the Main Voter Lists*. This booklet, produced by IFES, provides step-by-step guidance on voter list updating tasks.

Three mobile training teams were created. Each team combined two CEC staff and one IFES trainer. Despite challenging weather, the teams trained 86 percent (775) of the 898 LPA secretaries responsible for updating voter lists. Most of the participants were women (85%) and had limited computer and Excel skills.



Angela Caraman from the CEC, facilitating the training for LPA representatives in Cahul— February 2012  
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil

Almost all (98 percent) said the seminars were either “useful” or “very useful.” Most (72 percent) rated the content of the program as “very good” or “excellent.” Participants also reported that the seminars were a good combination of theory and practice. Three quarters of participants (74 percent) rated the facilitators as “very good” or “excellent.”



LPA secretaries responsible for voter lists during the training—February 2012  
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil

As a result of the training program, LPAs were given the guidance and software tools they needed, and the opportunity to have direct and personal contact with CEC staff. The CEC was able to model a new approach in communicating with LPAs and show appreciation of their work.

A formal debriefing with trainers, IFES and CEC management was held after the seminars were completed to discuss lessons learned and next steps in collaborating with LPAs to improve the voter list.

## BRIDGE Workshops on Political Finance: Promoting Change in Moldova

IFES and the CEC of Moldova held two Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) political financing workshops in Chisinau on 25-27 April and 2-4 May. The three-day workshops were designed to make participants aware of key concepts and guiding principles underpinning political financing; acquaint them with international experience in political finance regulations; facilitate discussion about proposed reforms to Moldovan legislation regulating financing of political parties and electoral campaigns.

Twenty-nine people attended, including six from the CEC and 10 from political parties, as well as other representatives from government bodies, the National Bank and domestic election observation organizations.

The workshops were opened by fully-accredited BRIDGE facilitator and Chairman of the CEC of Moldova Dr. Iurie Ciocan and IFES Moldova



Participants to the BRIDGE workshop on Political Finance May 2012, Chisinau. Photo credit— IFES/Igor Panfil

Country Director Steven Gray. Facilitators included Pavel Cabacenco (IFES), Mariana Musteata (CEC) and Ludmila Birsa (CEC), in partnership with political finance experts Natalia Iuras (IFES) and Dr. Ciocan. Co-facilitators included CEC Vice Chairman Stefan Uritu, who became a fully-accredited BRIDGE facilitator at the end of the workshop. Participants enjoyed the workshops. In their evaluations, they rated both the content of the workshop and the way in which complicated material had been presented highly. “I never thought I would say that I like training on political finance, but now I can say that,” one participant said.

The BRIDGE political financing workshops were part of ongoing CEC and IFES efforts to improve the legal framework of political party financing and promote reform in campaign financing legislation and practices in Moldova.

Read [full coverage](#) of the workshop on the BRIDGE website.

## Voter List Improvement Conference

On 19 and 20 June 2012, the CEC, with the assistance of IFES and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), convened the conference: *Voter Lists – Basis of Preparation of the State Voter Register*. The conference focused on the role of local public authorities (LPAs) in the voter registration process and what they need to do to ensure high-quality voter lists.

The conference was attended by 55 people representing 36 LPAs, state institutions, including Regstru, the National Center for Personal Data Protection and the State Chancellery.

The 33 LPAs with the largest percentage of obvious errors in their voter lists were invited, as well as three LPAs who had very few errors. Each LPA received paper and electronic copies of their voter lists with errors and had the chance to discuss their problems directly with the CEC chairman and CEC staff.

The most frequent problems were identified and potential solutions were recommended. Those with few errors shared their experience, providing tips on how they organize their voter list-updating responsibilities.

Many of the LPA secretaries had been recently appointed to be responsible for voter lists and had little to do with mistakes committed by previous LPA staff. This frequent occurrence was exacerbated by little knowledge-sharing with new staff. Lack of attention to detail on Election Day by precinct electoral bureau members was also discussed.

The conference ended with the CEC presenting its plans for future voter list improvements. Participants showed interest in improving the quality of their voter lists and appreciated the personalized approach to their problems. One participant said: “We, from villages, tend to see the CEC as a state body from the capital city giving commands and expecting them to be executed, but, now I am glad to see the CEC is a team of nice, hardworking people. From now on I believe the communication process between us will significantly improve”.



*Conference on voter list improvement with LPAs– June 2012.  
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil*

## CEC Political Finance Reform Bill Presented to Parliament

IFES and the CEC have been working on improving political party finance for almost two years. In November 2011, the CEC formed a political and campaign finance working group to develop amendments to laws impacting political party financing. The working group process was also supported by the Council of Europe (CoE).

This group was composed of representatives from government institutions, political parties and domestic and international civil society organizations. The larger working group met six times throughout the six-month process, while a smaller group met over 45 times to develop legislative amendments for consideration. The CoE convened three roundtables during the process to provide public forums on the proposed reforms and to keep Moldova’s European Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) reform initiative in front of the government and the public.

Working group discussions were lively, with over 200 different recommendations discussed throughout the six months. Analysis of each idea was intensive and focused on the key principles of political finance oversight: improving transparency, administrative simplicity, promoting internal party democracy, increasing professionalism among parties, providing efficient control and preventing corruption.

In early June, the CEC presented a bill to parliament that proposed amendments to 46 articles in eight different Moldovan laws. The Law on Political Parties, Election Code, Audiovisual Code, Law on the Court of Accounts, Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Code of Minor Offences and Tax Code are all to be amended and harmonized with each other.



*International organizations and the diplomatic corps  
at the briefing on political finance amendments proposed to Parliament.  
14 June 2012, CEC Chisinau. Photo credit: UNDP/Elena Verdeș*

The CEC and IFES have collaborated on presentations on the proposed bill to political party parliamentary factions, media, NGOs, opinion leaders, international organizations and the diplomatic corps. These briefings have sought to explain the process of reform, break down specifics of the proposed amendments and discuss ways to enhance the chances of passing the bill and gaining parliamentary faction consensus.

IFES has produced a booklet containing the draft bill in Romanian, Russian and English for the CEC to distribute to each parliamentarian and all relevant officials. Extra copies of the booklet are available from the IFES office in Moldova.

## People of the Moldova CEC: Chief of Staff Mariana Musteata

**Mariana Musteata is one of the longest-serving staff members of the CEC. As chief of staff since last year, her phone is always ringing. IFES sat down with Musteata to discuss the changes she has seen both in the organization and herself since taking on this role.**

**Mariana you have worked with the CEC since 2004 and witnessed its development. Please tell us, what have been the greatest changes in your life over the last three years?**

Since 2009, I have been involved in a wide variety of CEC activities. This has changed me by increasing my professionalism and improving my practical skills in different electoral areas, such as out-of-country voting, online registration of voters living abroad, strategic planning and comparative analysis of voter lists.

Many things happened for the first time both for me and for the CEC. While holding the position of head of the Elections and Referenda department, I became a fully-accredited BRIDGE facilitator and acted as a trainer during workshops, which were organized with IFES and other partners during the five national electoral events we have coordinated since 2009.

In April 2011, I was appointed acting chief of staff right before local elections, so I had to adapt quickly to the new responsibilities and get involved in all emergencies. The promotion to chief of staff in September 2011 gave me new responsibilities, but also challenged me. I am now in contact with all staff, and am trying to meet their needs. It is a big task, but I enjoy assisting and supporting their initiatives.

**How have you seen the CEC change in the last three years?**

I have seen tremendous development in the CEC as it has tried to become a modern institution, more transparent and open for cooperation with civil society, political parties, media, observers and international partners.

In 2004, we had only nine full-time staff. Over time, we radically evolved to a full-time commission, i.e. 37 staff according to the new structure approved by the CEC. We work actively on strategic electoral components. For instance, we developed and tested the new State Automated Information System – Elections (SAISE). We then went on to use that system to automatically generate ballot papers for the first time during local elections. The CEC is now working on finding easy methods for voters to check their names online and developing our ability to better analyze the quality of voter lists.

We have developed voter education materials, organized on-site small group trainings for election officials and local public authority representatives. The transparency of the CEC decision making process has increased by having all commission meetings presented live. Plus, all CEC decisions and all CEC documents can be found on our website: [www.cec.md](http://www.cec.md). It has been an incredibly busy last three years.

**How has IFES contributed to your professional development?**

After the interaction with the IFES team, it expanded my view of what I could do – of how I could express myself – and I became more confident and organized. I was impressed with interactive methods used by the IFES staff during trainings and roundtables and their involvement and straightforward cooperation with the CEC team. With the support of IFES, I developed my training skills. This has made me a better trainer and improved my ability to synthesize and analyze information. I have noticed the same change with my colleagues who have appreciated this openness and I am now working on building better team cooperation to achieve our common goals.



*Mariana explains reasons for repetitions in voter lists at the Conference with LPAs—June 2012*  
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil



*Mariana and Steven Gray (IFES) offer Certificates of Completion to participants to the Political Finance BRIDGE seminar*  
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil

**What are your personal objectives for the next few years?**

I would like to use my training skills in the recently-created CEC Continuous Training Center in the Electoral Domain. I would also like to do more comparative study in other countries and then use the knowledge gained to bring new election methodologies and technologies to Moldova. I also believe we can better cooperate with the Parliament of Moldova and other government bodies involved in the electoral process, as well as our development partners to ensure CEC initiatives are given a proper hearing so we can improve electoral administration and democracy in Moldova.

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