



IFES Moldova Newsletter

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Welcome to the second IFES Moldova Newsletter!

We continue to inform you about the most important electoral issues and events and hope you enjoy reading about our work on democracy and elections in Moldova.

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- Progress in voter list activities – the CEC trials new methods for improving voter lists (p.2)
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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.

Dear partners and friends of IFES Moldova:

We are proud of what the Moldova CEC and IFES were able to accomplish during this past year.

In 2011, the CEC significantly improved its internal and external operations. They completed and adopted their first-ever strategic plan, including a new and improved organizational structure. CEC staff performance was permanently enhanced by specialized workshops and conferences. This included a strategic planning training; Building Resources in Democracy and Governance Project (BRIDGE) workshops on electoral management and voter registration co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the Political Finance Reform Conference co-sponsored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The CEC also reached out to assist local public authorities to improve their voter lists.

All of this took place despite the CEC having to conduct another election. The general local elections – the fifth national election event in 26 months – yielded the lowest number of complaints in recent history. International and domestic observers praised CEC performance.

Still, there is much work to be done. We look forward to another productive year of assisting the CEC improve its functionality and effectiveness.

Sincerely,
Steven Gray
IFES Moldova Country Director



Steven Gray speaking about voter registration, Warsaw, 31 August 2011 - p.3
Photo credit: OSCE/Shiv Sharma



IFES-supported study on Campaign Finance in Moldova - p.4
Photo credit: OSCE/Igor Schimbator



Moldova CEC Chairman, Dr. Iurie Ciocan at the Political Finance Reform Conference - p.4
Photo credit: OSCE/Igor Schimbator



Participants at the BRIDGE Voter Registration workshop - p.3
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil

New Central Election Commission Strategic Plan



CEC and IFES representatives discuss the CEC Strategic Plan, September 2011
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil

In late 2009, IFES introduced the concept of strategic planning to the CEC. A summary of Joe Baxter's *Strategic Planning for Election Organizations: A Practical Guide for Conducting a Strategic Planning Exercise* was translated into Romanian and a training program on strategic planning was conducted for CEC leadership.

A strategic planning committee was then formed and an initial organizational assessment was completed. In the first quarter of 2010, members of the CEC and apparatus staff went through a five-day BRIDGE training on strategic planning.

A strategic plan would soon be created.

Then, elections intervened, and strategic planning took a back seat.

Between June 2010 and June 2011, Moldova had three national election events completely occupying the time and energies of the small organization. Additionally, a new commission was appointed in February 2011 and a new chairman was elected to lead the organization.

Thankfully, strategic planning never lost its appeal. After the general local elections of June 2011, the CEC decided that strategic planning should again be a priority and a plan should be completed prior to any more elections. The strategic planning committee was re-started as a working group.

The working group met throughout the summer examining the old organizational structure, updating the Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis and developing a draft plan. IFES supported the working group with information about strategic planning concepts and advice on how to proceed. A two-day strategic planning workshop was held at the Codru Hotel in early September 2011 with IFES support.

The workshop provided an opportunity for CEC members, apparatus staff and key partners from the international and domestic scene to provide input and definition to the strategic plan. Agreements were reached on draft statements of mission, vision and values. A set of activities was generated for each objective and a tentative timeline for implementation of activities was set.

The working group integrated input from the workshop and published a draft strategic plan. Public comment on the strategic plan was actively solicited during the fall of 2011 and the CEC officially approved the plan on December 9, 2011. It may be two years since the idea of creating a plan was first proposed, but IFES Moldova is proud of the CEC for its perseverance and for the plan it has created. [A copy of the strategic plan can be found on the cec.md website.](http://cec.md)

Voter List Improvement Activities in Progress

In September 2011, the CEC, with IFES assistance, formally set up the Voter List Working Group (VLWG) that is comprised of CEC leadership and apparatus staff; representatives of the State Chancellery; State Enterprises Registru and Cadastru; other stakeholders; and development partners: UNDP, Council of Europe and IFES. The VLWG has facilitated dialogue between agencies involved in compiling, using and updating voter lists.

The group is currently pursuing a wide range of activities to improve the voter lists in Moldova which are reflected in their action plan. The current list of activities is divided in three main areas:

1. Analysis of the quality of voter lists and legal framework
2. Collaboration with local and central public authorities towards the improvement of voter lists
3. Training and civic education of election officials and other stakeholders

A significant number of the planned activities have been implemented in a very short period of time. The CEC, with UNDP and IFES assistance, organized a BRIDGE voter registration workshop in which working group members analyzed different voter registration models.

The CEC Election and Referenda Department, in collaboration with the IT Department, received and adjusted updated voter lists sent by the 898 local public authorities to the CEC from October to November 2011. These lists were compiled into a single database and then audited using computer test software, first ever developed in March 2011. It was a big move forward for the project. More activities are planned for the future to promote and encourage better quality of voter lists in Moldova.

BRIDGE Voter Registration Workshop in Moldova



The new BRIDGE fully accredited facilitator for the CEC, Ludmila Bârșa with the facilitators team: Natia Kashakashvili, Doina Bordeianu and Pavel Cabacenco
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil



Ludmila Bârșa facilitates a BRIDGE voter registration activity
Photo credit: IFES/Igor Panfil

In November, the CEC, IFES and the UNDP conducted a five-day BRIDGE course on voter registration for CEC staff, key stakeholders from local public authorities, the State Enterprise “Registru” and other central governmental institutions.

The workshop was facilitated by a team of local and international experts: Natia Kashakashvili, UNDP expert and lead facilitator; Doina Bordeianu, workshop lead facilitator from the CEC; Pavel Cabacenco, workshop lead facilitator from IFES; Ludmila Bârșa, semi-accredited facilitator from the CEC; and Steven Canham, IFES voter registration expert.

Participants were welcomed by the Chairman of the CEC Dr. Iurie Ciocan, Chief Technical Advisor of the UNDP Electoral Support to Moldova Project Kate Sullivan and IFES Country Director Steven Gray.

The final evaluations filled out by participants showed the workshop was a success; it was categorized as “interesting,” “intensive,” “active,” “relevant,” “important” and “useful.”

Most participants said the knowledge they gained during the workshop will help them in their daily activities and will contribute to improving voter lists in Moldova. The workshop also helped establish better cooperation between representatives of different departments and government agencies.

Participants highly appreciated the interactive BRIDGE methodology, which helped them learn a lot of new information in a short period of time.

A participant noted,
“The workshop was very useful for us members of the Voter List Working Group. As we work towards improving voter lists, it will contribute to better cooperation with colleagues from other governmental institutions.”

IFES Proposes New Approach to Working with Local Public Authorities

In September 2011, representatives of the CEC, the State Enterprise “Registru” and IFES took part in a seminar on “Synergies between Voter and Population Registration.” Organized by the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the seminar took place in Warsaw.

During the two days of conversation and presentations, 60 representatives from 17 countries discussed different aspects of voter registration and exchanged their experiences in resolving common problems.

IFES was represented at the seminar by Moldova staff and the Voter Registration Expert and Kenya CoP Mike Yard.

Yard spoke on key principles of voter registration and had a separate meeting with the Moldovan delegation to discuss voter registration challenges in Moldova in greater detail. Yard suggested the Moldovan CEC use a more proactive, volunteer-based approach to its relationship with local public authorities, as they play a key role in the voter registration process.

This idea was taken to heart and has been integrated into activities planned by the voter list improvement plan developed by the VLWG.



Voter Registration expert Mike Yard discussing about the “volunteer-based” approach with Dr. Iurie Ciocan, Moldova CEC Chairman

Political Finance Reform Conference

On October 27-28, 2011, the CEC, with IFES and the OSCE/ODIHR, held an international conference on reform of political finances in the Republic of Moldova.

The conference gathered representatives of political parties, state bodies, national and international NGOs to discuss the finances of Moldovan political parties and explore how other countries manage political finance reform.

Seventy persons were invited, including politicians, lawyers, economists and political party finance specialists.

Conference objectives were to:

- Discuss findings and recommendations from different domestic studies on the issue
- Present international experience in the political party finance domain
- Organize debates to encourage new ideas and recommendations on reform
- Develop consensus on improvement of the legal framework and the monitoring process of political and electoral campaign finance

The event was opened by President of the CEC Dr. Iurie Ciocan, OSCE Ambassador Philip Remler, IFES Country Director Steven Gray.

The Conference included six presentations by Dr. Marcin Walecki, OSCE/ODIHR; Dr. Magnus Ohman, IFES; Dr. Iurie Ciocan, CEC; Mrs. Natalia Iuras, IFES; Mr. Sergiu Ostaf, CReDO; and Mr. Cornel Ciurea, IDIS Viitorul.

Political party finances are a key element of credible elections. The strength of political party finance regulation influences the respect parties have for democratic principles. Striking the appropriate balance between state regulation of parties as public actors and respecting the fundamental right to association requires well-crafted, intently-tailored legislation. A balance between transparent private financing with the opportunity for state funding ensures a level playing field for all political parties.

Conference participants were invited to discuss three important aspects of political finance regulation:

- Reporting systems and disclosure requirements
- Strengths and weaknesses of public funding
- Effective control over political party finances

Discussions focused on national and international studies in this field, including the Council of Europe (CoE) Recommendation Rec (2003)4 on Common Rules against Corruption in the Funding of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns; the IFES/CReDO/CPD Campaign Finance report; and the IDIS Viitorul campaign finance monitoring report, *Political Parties in Moldova: Laws, Practices, Reforms*.

A number of recommendations were proposed.

These included: imposing limits to donations, improving disclosure of donors, making financial reports more available, implementing state funding of parties, encouraging gender balance in party lists and improving party finance monitoring and audit functions.

After the Conference, the CEC formally organized a working group of representatives from the CEC, other relevant governmental organizations, civil society and international partners. The working group is analyzing the Conference recommendations and developing formal proposals for legal amendments.



Steven Gray (IFES) speaking about respect for democratic principles at the Political Finance Reform Conference.
Photo credit: OSCE/Igor Schimbator



MPs and CEC members listening to speakers on the public funding, Political Finance Reform Conference.
Photo credit: OSCE/Igor Schimbator

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