

# International experts: Minor adjustments to the current electoral system can correct its main disadvantages, and a major reform of the electoral system may have profound impact on political life and democratic consolidation in Moldova



Today, 23 May 2017, the International Conference 'Options and Considerations for Reforming the Electoral System of the Republic of Moldova. Comparisons from International Experience', organized by Promo-

LEX Association, with the participation of experts from the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Norway and Romania, took place at Chisinau. The event aimed to contribute to debate the opportunity to change the Moldovan electoral system by comparing the impact of different electoral systems applied in different social, political, cultural, other contexts.

The **'Electoral System Design in Moldova'** study, developed by the international experts **Mette Bakken, Norway, and Adrian Sorescu, Romania**, (*see the presentation [here](#)*) was presented during the conference. The authors of the study tried to answer the main question that dominates the public life at Chisinau over the past three months: *'To what extent the electoral system change might be a solution to the people's dissatisfaction or it could bring any improvements in political class and, if it could, what electoral system would bring the most advantages and the least disadvantages?'*

In this context, the study analysed the pros and cons of each electoral system: the majority system in one round and the mixed-parallel system (drafts under discussion in the Parliament), and also the system of proportional representation in regional constituencies and the mixed member proportional system (with compensation). For more details about these electoral systems, including the simulation of 2014 parliamentary election results on the basis of these systems, please see pages 56-66 of the Study.

**Experts Mette Bakken and Adrian Sorescu concluded in this study that despite that the electoral system in place has proven to carry both advantages and disadvantages, major changes to its design may have profound impact on political life and democratic consolidation. In Moldova, it is not clear what would be the result from passing from an electoral system to another one. To this end, the experts formulated the following recommendations:**

- **Adopt an open list proportional system** whereby parties propose a priority list of candidates but where voters can make real impact on the rank-ordering and hence influence who accesses the Parliament.
- **Multi-member districts ought to be established.** The establishment of districts should take into account the existing administrative structures.
- **The legal threshold** for political parties should be

**reduced – to 3-4% – for single parties.** In line with traditions in Moldova, incremental threshold may be used for electoral blocks.

- **The legal threshold for independent candidates should be removed.** A natural threshold – resulting from other mathematical properties (electoral formula, district magnitude) of the electoral system – should apply.
- **Provided that an open list proportional system at regional level is adopted, the opportunity of introducing a two-tier system ought to be explored to guarantee the proportionality of the results at the national level.**
- **Electoral system reform efforts, including adjustments to the existing PR system in use, must pay attention to how changes might interact with the recently introduced 40 percent quota rule.**
- **Provided that Moldova changes the system by which representatives are elected to parliament, the issue of minority representation ought to be carefully monitored.**
- **Provided that electoral reform entails the division of the country into electoral districts, one solution for Moldova is to establish separate electoral districts for citizens abroad.**
- **Provided that electoral reform entails the division of the country into electoral districts and the Transnistrian region remains under the effective control of local authorities, policy makers ought to explore the possibility of the Moldovan Parliament working with vacant mandates.**

The whole **‘Electoral System Design in Moldova’** study, developed by the international experts Mette Bakken, Norway, and Adrian Sorescu, Romania, can be downloaded at [promolex.md](http://promolex.md).

To see all the presentations of the international experts and the discussions from the International Conference **‘Options and Considerations for Reforming the Electoral System of the**

**Republic of Moldova. Comparisons from International Experience'**, follow the event record on privesc.eu platform:  
<http://bit.ly/2q7oXQ1>.

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