



Press release

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Report on the state of democracy in Moldova: bank fraud, mistrust and poverty are the main threats to the country's democratic values

The state of democracy in the Republic of Moldova has deteriorated significantly in the last five years, being threatened by bank fraud, corruption, poverty and inefficient governance. This is the opinion of Veaceslav Ioniță and Diana Enachi, authors of the report on the state of democracy in the Republic of Moldova, presented on June 30 by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul" and INEKO Slovakia.

The report on the state of democracy aims to assess the quality of democracy in the Republic of Moldova in relation to political participation, independence of public institutions, civil liberties and the extent of corruption.

"Democracy in the Republic of Moldova is determined by the quality of life. And obviously, most citizens believe that their quality of life does not live up to expectations, which is why they have a negative opinion about the state of democracy in the country. If we assess the situation in the last five years, about a third of citizens, according to our report, believe that things have remained intact, and the state of democracy has not changed, and obviously the quality of life of the population, unfortunately, has not changed", states Liubomir Chiriac, executive director of IDIS "Viitorul".

In his turn, Peter Golias, INEKO director believes the following on democracy: *"Why actually democracy matters? The most important thing is that it brings quite easy possibility for people to replace government that they are not satisfied with in regular elections. It brings also open public debate which helps to find the best solutions to economic and social problems. And this opened public debate together with distribution of power prevents from "power abuse" which is crucial for building social capital, which means trust among people. Also, it brings better possibilities for innovation, which means realization of potential of every citizen in the country".*

The study on the state of democracy in the Republic of Moldova was conducted based on several sociological tools, applied between January and April. Thus, in order to find out what the people in the country think about the situation of democracy, an opinion poll was conducted at national level on a sample of 1,384 people, organized focus groups, surveyed experts and representatives from the diaspora. Thus, only 6.6% of citizens believe that the elections in the Republic of Moldova were free and fair, and the country is led by the will of the people - one of the lowest levels in the last 15 years. At the same time, **43.1% of citizens consider that the state of democracy is bad**, compared to 28.7% of citizens who have a more or less positive impression, and the **majority of citizens (67.6%) believe that democracy in the country it is determined by the quality of life.**

At the same time, in the opinion of the participants in the focus groups, in our country the freedom of justice, equality before the law does not work, corruption in public institutions persists and there is a lack of trust in the future. It is largely believed that politicians do not act in the interests of citizens, but rather in the interests of individuals or groups. And according to the citizens of the diaspora, the factors that most influence the quality of democracy in the Republic of Moldova are the protection of human rights, the involvement of citizens in public affairs, the quality of NGOs and the freedom of the media.

"We have rich countries that are not democratic, but we do not have any poor countries that are democratic. And our citizens, who are subject to subsistence, admit that unfortunately they do not have time to think about social values, and poverty and poor living standards greatly influence the state of democracy. Our daily problems simply do not allow us to think about democratic values", says economist Veaceslav Ioniță.

Most respondents consider that the **situation of democracy in the Republic of Moldova has remained unchanged in the last five years (28%)**. The events of the last five years have had a negative influence on the quality of democracy in the Republic of Moldova, and in this sense, **bank fraud is considered to be the one that has most affected democracy in Moldova**. Most respondents rated this event with the most negative impact. In second place is the resignation of the Maia Sandu Government. Even if some survey participants appreciated this positively, the vast majority of respondents considered that this event had a very negative influence on the quality of democracy in the country, the state of democracy report also shows.

Regarding the **role of state institutions in promoting democracy in the Republic of Moldova, in the opinion of citizens the greatest impact has civil society (38%) and the media**. The public media enjoys a positive appreciation from 41.7% of respondents, while 33.6% of citizens believe that the private media has a positive role in promoting democratic values in our country. **At the opposite pole are the courts and the General Prosecutor's Office. Therefore, 44.5% of those interviewed believe that the courts have a negative role in promoting democracy.**

When asked how democracy is seen in the Republic of Moldova compared to neighboring countries, the results show visible divergences in the assessment of the state of democracy by experts, the diaspora and the population. The point of contention is the Russian Federation. While experts appreciate the state of democracy in Russia extremely poor, the population considers that things in Russia are relatively good and the level of democracy is much higher than in Moldova. However, among all categories of respondents, there are two clear consensus: Romania is the only country in the region, which is positively appreciated in terms of democracy by all groups interviewed. Also, all categories of respondents believe that there **is more democracy in Moldova compared to Ukraine, but less than in Romania**.

Asked what would contribute to improving the quality of democracy in the Republic of Moldova in the long term, citizens who participated in focus groups believe that the level of democracy will improve if people concerned with the needs of the population come to lead the country. However, others believe that the level of democracy on the contrary will decrease in the coming years because things are deteriorating and young people are going abroad. And in the opinion of the diaspora representatives, the elimination of poverty, the independence of the regulatory institutions and the economic development of the country will improve the quality of democracy in our country.

"The well-being of the country and of every citizen is strictly determined by the quality of democracy in the country. Therefore, protecting the fundamental elements of a state with a high quality of democracy is the guarantee of the well-being of every citizen. In order to improve the quality of democracy in the Republic of Moldova, first of all, it is necessary for politicians to be more responsible, laws to work better, the level of corruption to be reduced, people to be more informed and active. A responsible and efficient government is indispensable for a rule of law with democratic principles and values in action ", believes the economist Diana Enachi.

The authors recommend to the authorities, but also to citizens and civil society a series of measures that would improve the state of democracy in the Republic of Moldova. These measures include improving the capacity of the authorities to develop and implement measures to prevent corruption; ensuring the independence and transparency of the judiciary; avoiding populist messages by political parties; active and permanent monitoring of the

transparency, efficiency and integrity of public institutions; ensuring motivating and decent salaries; active involvement of citizens in public affairs and strengthening investigative journalism.

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The initiative ["Supporting democracy, independence and transparency of key public institutions in Moldova"](#) is implemented by the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", in partnership with the Institute for Economic and Social Reforms in Slovakia (INEKO) and is financially supported by the Official Development Assistance Program of the Slovak Republic (SlovakAid). The initiative aims to inform the public about the development of democracy and the independence of key state institutions, as well as to improve the transparency and financial stability of local public authorities and state-owned enterprises in the Republic of Moldova.

For details, contact Ana – Maria Veverita: ana.veverita@viitorul.org or at phone number (0 22) 221844