

MOLDOVA'S NEW GOVERNMENT

Parliament confirms Recean Government amidst mounting security risks

16 February 2023

INTRODUCTION

Moldova's parliament has confirmed ex-Interior Minister and former presidential security advisor Dorin Recean as the country's next Prime Minister and his proposed cabinet as the country's new government. Recean will succeed Natalia Gavrilița, who resigned from her position on 10th February, citing an inability to navigate through the series of crises Moldova is currently facing.

Gavrilița's resignation came just as Moldovan President Maia Sandu revealed an alleged Russian plot to overthrow the country's government. While the Kremlin has denied this claim, Moldova – due to its Russia-allied breakaway region Transnistria and geographic proximity to Russia's war against Ukraine – is facing enhanced security risks and remains particularly vulnerable to a potential escalation.

An economist by profession, with longtime political experience, Recean is also expected to focus on the short-term challenges facing Moldova, including the economic and energy crises, as well as on maintaining the country's strategic Western course and integration into the European Union.

Below, Aretera provides further insight into the recent change of government and its implications.



This memo will cover:

-  Moldova's new PM and his newly formed government,
-  the composition of the new government,
-  political stability prospects for Chișinău,
-  short-term security implications as Russia's war against Ukraine continues.

A SWIFT CHANGING OF THE GUARD

On 16th February, Moldova's parliament officially confirmed former Interior Minister Dorin Recean as the country's new Prime Minister and approved his newly proposed cabinet as the country's next government. Recean's confirmation comes only six days after Natalia Gavrilița announced her resignation as PM.

Gavrilița, an economist by profession, was elected PM in August 2021, a month after her pro-Western Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) scored a landslide victory in the country's last parliamentary elections. Her party ran on a pro-EU and anti-corruption ticket and supported incumbent President Maia Sandu in the 2020 presidential elections, in which Sandu also scored a comfortable victory.

Discussing her decision on 10th February, Gavrilița, who stepped down after only 18 months in the role, implied that her government was unable to manage the multiple – economic, energy and security – crises facing the country. Having accepted her resignation, President Sandu immediately nominated her top security advisor and former Interior Minister Dorin Recean for PM. Recean was swiftly confirmed by parliament, along with the country's new cabinet.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE RECEAN CABINET

| The Recean Government as Confirmed by the Parliament of Moldova on 16 th February 2023 | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Cabinet Member | Position | Portfolio/Responsibility |
| Dorin Recean | Prime Minister | - |
| Nicu Popescu | Deputy PM, Minister | Foreign Affairs & EU Integration |
| Dumitru Alaiba | Deputy PM, Minister | Economic Development & Digitalization |
| Vladimir Bolea | Deputy PM, Minister | Agriculture & Industrial Development |
| Oleg Serebrian | Deputy PM, Minister | Reintegration [of Transnistria] |
| Veronica Sirețeanu | Minister | Finance |
| Veronica Mihailov-Moraru | Minister | Justice |
| Ala Nemerenco | Minister | Health |
| Victor Parlicov | Minister | Energy |
| Anatolie Nosafii | Minister | Defence |
| Ana Revenco | Minister | Interior |
| Anatolie Topală | Minister | Education |
| Alexei Buzu | Minister | Labour |
| Iordanca Rodica-Iordanov | Minister | Environment |
| Lilia Dabija | Minister | Regional Development |
| Sergei Prodan | Minister | Culture |

(Source: Government of Moldova)

PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL STABILITY

Dorin Recean is an experienced politician who has held a number of senior political positions. Prior to serving as Deputy PM for IT and Communications in three consecutive, short-lived acting cabinets between 2010 and 2012, he served as Interior Minister in the governments of Vladimir Filat and Iurie Leancă (2012-2015) and is widely credited for reforming the country's interior ministry.

An economist by profession, Recean later moved to the private and academic sectors and holds extensive experience in big data (Siveco.ro) and information analysis (UNDP.org). Returning to public life, he became the Defence and National Security Advisor to President Sandu in February 2022. Recean is a firm supporter of Moldova's strategic course and integration into the European Union (alongside Ukraine, Moldova received EU candidate country status last June). Recean's government will include eleven ministers from the Gavrilița Cabinet, alongside new additions such as Finance Minister Veronica Sirețeanu, as well as two newly established ministries (energy and regional development).

Despite the unexpected change of leadership, the country's government remains stable. Holding 63 of the 101 seats in the Moldovan legislature, the ruling PAS, which supports both PM Recean and President Sandu, has a comfortable majority in parliament. This will ensure a smooth legislative and implementation process for future initiatives from the government, as well as for anti-crisis measures. Having nominated her top security advisor for PM, President Sandu is also likely to play a more active role in running the country. At the same time, the pro-Russian opposition and anti-government populist movements will continue to challenge the PAS' rule by staging protests over worsening living standards.

LOOKING AHEAD: MOUNTING SECURITY RISKS

The confirmation of the Recean Government comes as Chișinău will have to navigate through a series of different crises, with looming security risks on the horizon. Aside from the massive economic impact, Moldova, due to decades-long dependence on Russia, has been among those countries most impacted by the energy crisis. The country also remains the most vulnerable¹ to a potential escalation in Russia's war against Ukraine – not only due to its geographic proximity to the war but its separatist Transnistria region that is de facto controlled by the Kremlin.

Based on intelligence from Ukraine, Sandu recently revealed an alleged Russian plot to overthrow the Moldovan government. This comes shortly after tensions have escalated between Moldova and Russian-controlled Transnistria over a recently adopted Moldovan law that would introduce criminal penalties for separatism.

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If you would like to schedule a discussion of this paper, please contact:
[Dominik Istrate](mailto:d.istrate@areterapa.com), Advisor for Central & Eastern Europe at **d.istrate@areterapa.com**

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¹ See [here](#) for Aretera's overview of the top risks facing the CEE region in 2023