Analyses OSW

CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES 28.01.2015 www.osw.waw.pl

Moldova has a minority coalition

Kamil Całus

On 23 January, following tough negotiations lasting almost two months, Moldova's two largest pro-European groupings, the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM, 23 seats) and the Democratic Party (PDM, 19 seats), sealed a coalition agreement. The Liberal Party (13 seats) also took part in the talks, but was not finally accepted as a coalition partner because PLDM and PDM rejected its key demands (including a depoliticisation of the prosecutor general's office, which is now controlled by the democrats). The new minority coalition has named itself the Political Alliance for a European Moldova (APME).

Pursuant to the coalition agreement, PLDM will decide on the choice of the prime minister and the staffing of nine ministries (including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Finance) and of two parliamentary commissions. PDM will decide on the choice of the parliamentary speaker and the staffing of seven ministries (including the ministries for the economy, transport and regional development) and two commissions. The agreement emphasises that European integration is a matter of top priority for the government. Adrian Candu, who had served as a minister for the economy, was elected parliamentary speaker.

Commentary

- PLDM and PDM together have only 42 of 101 parliamentary seats, and will thus be able to form a minority government. However, the coalition may count on support from the Communists (PCRM, 20 seats) during the vote of confidence and later in the process of ruling the country. The election of the parliamentary speaker serves as one proof of this. In exchange for supporting the government, PCRM will have its deputy parliamentary speaker and will probably be given control of some state institutions (the Central Election Commission and the Radio and Television Coordination Council).
- Given the fact that this is a minority government supported by the Communists, its ability and will to carry out necessary reforms may be impaired, including those required as part of the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU. Even though PCRM has lost Russia's support, has changed its policy over the past few months and no longer opposes Moldova moving closer to the EU, this is still an unstable party which may disintegrate in the immediate future, and this will affect the new government's stability. The expected inefficiency of the new government (including possible conflict between the coalition partners) alongside its collaboration with the Communists will most likely further frustrate the pro-European electorate. This will have an adverse effect on support

for Moldova's integration with the EU and will be used by the opposition pro-Russian Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova led by Igor Dodon. However, the Communists' support may make it easier for the new coalition to elect a president in 2016, since PLDM, PDM and PCRM have a combined total of 62 votes, while 61 are required to elect the head of state.

- Although the coalition agreement has been signed, it is at present difficult to state who will be the next prime minister of Moldova. On January 28th the president has entrusted the task of forming a new cabinet to Iurie Leanca, the previous prime minister, whose candidacy has been put forward by PLDM and PDM. However, he will probably not receive the backing of the Communists, and the Liberals – who have initially refused to support the government – have taken an unclear stance. Unless Leanca is backed by a parliamentary majority, the minister of foreign affairs, Natalia Gherman is most likely to be nominated prime minister.