

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

FOR

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Disclaimer Note:

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life.

This strategy was developed within the framework of the UNDP project „Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova”. Opinions expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the official views and policies of the United Nations Development Programme.

Executive Summary:

This strategy is a part of UNDP's project to "Strengthen the Institutional Capacity of the Moldovan Parliament". It was designed after a field trip and desk research. It recognizes that the pro-EU stance of the Moldovan Presidency and of the majority (Communist) party has created a uniquely **favorable context in which to place the new communications offensive of the Moldovan Parliament**. Indeed through communications, the Parliament can help push the EU Agenda, enhance its credibility with the public and become a true protector to Moldova's democracy.

For Parliaments all over the world one of the most important tasks is to create an **effective link between the public and its representatives**. Allowing voters to have an input into the law-making process and, on the other hand, being able to communicate the purpose of legislation to voters are two twin aspects of legislative work which require a concerted effort. Effective communications contributes to avoiding disconnect between voters and deputies. In Moldova, the system of list voting and the existence of only one electoral circumscription for the whole country raises **particular communications challenges**. The most important one is that constituents do not have a deputy uniquely representing their area. Hence effective communications between parliamentary representatives and constituents needs to be a key objective.

In addition, several recommendations will facilitate the implementation of a strategy that can make **Parliament an effective protector of Moldova's democracy**. This positioning is supported by the recent openness of the Parliament's leadership towards civil society and will help build needed trust with the public at large.

Among the recommendations to enhance Parliament's presence on the national scene and increase the **public's trust** and support of the institution are some that can be implemented immediately, such as:

Create a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section on the Web complete with **answers to the most common queries** people may have about Parliament.

Update and add to the Web site:

The existence of the Website is a spectacular step forward. The site should be commended for being clean, simple, and easy to navigate.

Carve up a substitute for the Intranet:

Even before there is a proper Intranet, carve out a **section of the Website for internal use** only

Appoint an official spokesperson (as part of the Parliament administration);

Cancel the News Digest; redirect the energies of freed staff in the Press Office and the Analysis & Prognosis Office:

Institutionalize regular hearings:

Replace the live broadcasts of the Plenary sessions on National TV with a specialized Cable broadcast.

Provide weekly Info-packs with draft laws before the sessions

Open door days:

Establish once a month an **Open Doors day** where anyone is invited to tour the Parliament;

Bring your children to work:

Allow deputies and Parliament Staff to bring their children to work one day a year, every year, to **familiarize the kids** (and the family—invite one child and one adult each year) **with the work of a Parliamentarian;**

Institute European days:

Institute **Colloquia and Conferences on key themes** of interest to the Moldovan Public in relation with specific EU events: e.g. European Union history Day on May 9th—discusses the motivation and actions behind the initial Treaty; European Consumer days—discusses the rights and obligations of EU Consumers, etc.

Target communications to Brussels (Commission and European Parliament)

Increase the frequency of the Parliament's newsletter to 6 times a year and consider **translating it in English for distribution throughout Moldovan Embassies** throughout the world and through the Romanian EU mission.

Celebrate the UN days—especially those pertaining to human rights, other democratic values or issues established as a priority in R. Moldova:

In addition, this report suggests further medium term recommendations. These recommendations are not considered “medium term” because they are less urgently needed but primarily because they **require additional funds** and in turn budgets need time to be negotiated.

Deputies have to travel as representatives of the people, not of political parties

Library to be Automated, new books (EU) purchased or donated, CDs with legislation provided as well as language training

Language training for Deputies and staff

Integrate Press and part of the Information unit into a Communications unit

Set up a Department of Relations with the Public

Set up a C-Span-like public cable TV channel:

Offer working internships to students of Political Science, Law, Public Administration and Communications

Communicate Code of the Civil Servant on the Web-site

Communicate with Moldovans abroad

Long-term recommendations

Information systems:

As mentioned in Section 2, **each desk/workstation** ought to be equipped **with a computer and internet link;**

Deputies and their staff need to **take the European Computer Driver's License (ECDL)** test to enable them to use computers at their full potential and navigate easily on the internet;

Make an **arrangement with a general manufacturer to provide low/cost leasing arrangements**, or work with US Foundations to ship a cargo of second-hand computers, one on every desk. (Also explore the opportunity to acquire refurbished equipment or receive donations of computers).

Potential changes in the electoral law:

Proper communications cannot be established if voters do not identify individual Deputies taking a special interest in their particular issue;

Thus it seems necessary to **rethink the electoral law and consider turning every raion into an electoral district**. There should be other solutions to the Transdniestran problem that do not mean high jacking the entire electoral system and throwing the baby with the bathwater.