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Moldovan Election Fails Again

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CHISINAU, Moldova — Moldova has missed a deadline for candidates to register for the presidential election planned for Friday, with the ruling Alliance for European Integration failing to pick a candidate.

The election, to be held by parliament and not by direct popular vote, was intended to end a political deadlock that has kept the small nation without a full-time president for two years.

The president must win the support of at least 61 of the 101 deputies. But parliament has been evenly divided between Communists and the Alliance for European Integration, and neither side has been able to muster the required majority.

It had been assumed that the impasse could be broken this time because three lawmakers quit the communist party this month and their votes could give the pro-European Alliance the needed majority.

But the Alliance, hit by internal struggles, announced just hours before the registration deadline Monday that it had not come up with a compromise candidate.

"Until we have the guaranteed 61 votes for our candidate, we will not carry out elections just for the sake of it," Marian Lupu, leader of the Democratic Party, which belongs to the Alliance, told reporters.

Mihai Ghimpu, leader of the Liberal Party, another Alliance member, said a vote with no candidates might not be viewed as a vote at all. The parliament may just reschedule it, he said.

"With no bride, there is no wedding," Ghimpu said.

The country has had no full-time president since Communist leader Vladimir Voronin stepped down in September 2009 after two consecutive terms.

Failure to elect a president has paralyzed much-needed reforms in the country, which aspires to join the European Union.

The Communist opposition has twice frustrated attempts by the Alliance to secure the election of center-left politician Marian Lupu, who is now speaker of parliament. A later attempt to switch to direct popular voting failed.

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