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Moldova: Semi-Autonomous Region Elects Pro-Russian Leader

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A pro-Russian politician who favors closer ties with Moscow has been elected governor of a semi-autonomous region in Moldova.

Election officials said that Irina Vlah won more than 51 percent of the vote in Sunday's election to be elected governor of Gagauzia for a four-year term.

After she was declared winner Monday, Vlah struck a conciliatory tone, saying she wanted economic development for Gagauzia and good relations with Moldovan authorities.

She had campaigned for more autonomy for the region populated by Turkish Christians, but on Monday said it was doubtful whether the plan was viable.

The region enjoys economic autonomy, but has Moldovan police, schools and courts.

Moldovan authorities are concerned about attempts by Russia to destabilize the country. Moscow opposes Moldova's efforts to join the European Union.

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