

Moldovan parliament votes: voluntary amalgamation becomes simpler, better funded for development



The process of voluntary amalgamation of administrative and territorial units will be simplified and improved, as an essential part of the local public administration reform. The amendments, drafted following an extensive public consultation process with the participation of over 4,500 mayors and citizens, were approved today by the parliament with 59 votes. At present, more than 320 decisions to initiate the voluntary amalgamation process have already been approved. In the vast majority of cases, the decision is taken either unanimously or by an overwhelming majority of votes.

In the parliament's plenum, the secretary general of the government emphasized that people's interests were at the center of all decisions and that the goal is to create development opportunities for localities of Moldova: "The reform is not only necessary; it is long overdue, and any postponement is an act of profound irresponsibility towards our strong mayors and the families who, in 2026, still do not have access to water and sanitation," said the head of the State Chancellery.

The proposed changes reduce bureaucracy, simplify procedures and remove some constraints that complicated the process, such as the fixed distance limit of 25 km between localities, thus providing more flexibility in choosing the most appropriate solutions for each community.

An important principle remains keeping public services close to citizens. Following amalgamation, people will be able to access public services in their own settlement, including through the Unified Service Delivery Center (CUPS), without having to travel to the administrative headquarters.

The new rules also provide greater clarity for local authorities regarding the process' timeline. Until the 2027 local elections, no new elections will be organized in amalgamated localities and they will operate in the new format after the ballot.

The government will continue to support voluntary amalgamation and will triple the investment incentive in infrastructure provided to localities that choose to merge. Thus, the amount of support will increase from 1,000 to 3,000 lei per inhabitant. The total estimated cost of the incentive package for the period 2026–2030 is 6.49 billion

lei.

According to the secretary general of the government, voluntary amalgamation, as part of the process of reforming local public administration, is necessary in a context where the current administrative fragmentation no longer allows many localities to develop at the level expected by citizens. At present, over 87 per cent of the mayoralties from Moldova have fewer than 3,000 inhabitants. Only 53 town halls have more than 5,000 inhabitants, 63 have between 3,000 and 5,000 inhabitants, while 776 have fewer than 3,000 inhabitants.

Excessive fragmentation of local public administration does not bring modernization and produces increasingly larger disparities between communities. Stronger mayoralties manage to modernize their localities more rapidly, while many small mayoralties lag behind in basic infrastructure and essential public services.

Data show that 34 per cent of households from Moldova do not have access to water and sanitation, and among them, 8 out of 10 households without running water and 77 per cent of households without sanitation are located in settlements with small mayoralties. At the same time, small mayoralties have low own revenues, about 11 per cent of their budget, while 50-60 per cent of resources come from the state budget.

The local public administration reform entails setting a minimum threshold of 3,000 inhabitants for mayoralties. By creating larger local public administrations, communities will be able to provide better services, will have the capacity and specialists needed to access external funds and implement large projects, and will have more financial resources to meet local needs. The number of districts will also be reduced from 32 to 10. The new structures will be able to manage projects of major interest.

To inform citizens and local authorities, the platform www.primariiputernice.gov.md has been launched, bringing together useful information about the local public administration reform and practical tools for communities. In addition, two interactive tools are available here – the amalgamation simulator and the municipal budget dashboard.

“Diverse opinions help us to have a well-prepared and well-designed reform. But the cost of inaction and delay is too high. We must carry out this reform together, because it affects the entire country and we are responsible to those who still do not have access to essential household services, such as water and sanitation,” stressed the government’s secretary general.

