

Bulgaria and Moldova Elect New Presidents who Promise Closer Relations with Russia

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 13, BULGARIA AND MOLDOVIA elected new presidents overtly friendly toward Russia. Rumen Radev, the new Bulgarian president decisively defeated the pro-Western candidate. Radev not only called for the EU to cease sanctions against Russia, he also announced his willingness to accept the Crimean referendum that made Crimea part of the Russian Federation. Nonetheless, he has also committed to maintaining Bulgaria's commitments with the West

The new Moldovan presidential Igor Dodon, is also pro Moscow. He defeated World Bank employee Maia Sandu who campaigned under an EU banner. Russia and the EU have hotly contested Moldova, which seems to prefer the former. Unlike Bulgaria, Moldova is not an EU member, nor is it a member of NATO. Dodon has indicated interest in joining the Russian sponsored Eurasia Economic Community and [“eliminating the possibility of cooperation with NATO”](#), but he has also [“promised to balance between Russian and the West, a feat that neighboring Ukraine has found impossible.”](#)

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Estonia Pivots Slightly Toward Moscow

THE EU AND NATO have been vigorously courting Estonia, the North Baltic State of that borders Russia, into their liberal sphere of influence. Given the fact that ethnic Russians comprise roughly a quarter of Estonia's population, the move toward Western liberalism has been strenuously opposed and the highly courted Estonian government has prematurely failed.

Prime Minister Taavi Roivas Reform Party received a vote of no-confidence from the Estonian parliament. Following the vote, the Center Party, a party that has a collaborative agreement with Putin's United Russia Party, has surfaced as the new coalition leader. The Center Party has the support of the Russian minority and has indicated its commitment to continuing ties with Russia.

The Center Party's agreement with United Russia states that the two share common goals and interests and should cooperate in the areas of information exchange relative to professional party building, legislative processes, financial professionalism, international relations, cultural exchange and work among youth. [The agreement exists to deepen the "good-neighborly cooperation between Estonia and Russia."](#)

The document of collaboration was signed by Mailis Reps, current Deputy Chairman of the Center Party.

**Russia Withdraws From
International Criminal Court
followed by Three African**

Nations

ON NOVEMBER 16, VLADIMIR PUTIN signed an executive order withdrawing Russia from the 124 member International Criminal Court (ICC), the international war times court situated in the Hague, Netherlands. The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement explaining that the ICC “did not live up to the hopes associated with it and did not become truly independent.” At the same time three African nations, Gambi, Burundi and South Africa, have also announced their intent to withdraw from the ICC.

The African nations are withdrawing because they perceive the ICC as a tool of Western imperialism. All three countries consider the ICC to be an “outside institution imposing its will on African nations without their input, [perpetuating a history of Western intervention and African oppression.](#)”

Rise of Macron and En Marche Strengthens National Front of Le Pen

EMMANUEL MACRON, former French Minister of Economy has announced his candidacy for president. Because Macron plans to compete as an Independent supported by En Marche, a movement he founded in 2016, he will likely receive votes from

both opposition parties, the Republicans (center right) and the Socialist (center left). If this occurs, the National Front of Marie le Pen, which is competing with both these parties will be the beneficiary as the centrist voter will be split between center right and center left parties thereby reducing the votes going to each and increasing the chance of a victory for the Le Pen in next years presidential election.