



MOLDOVA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2025: POLLING STATIONS ABROAD

ADEPT ASSOCIATION
AUGUST 2025



Adept

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This product was developed by the ADEPT Association with the support of the project “Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova,” implemented by UNDP Moldova and funded by Norway, Canada, Sweden, and Denmark. The content of this material belongs to the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the UN, including UNDP, UN member states, or the donors.

The Association for Participatory Democracy ADEPT is an independent center for analysis and consultancy on decision-making, political, electoral, and socio-economic processes in the Republic of Moldova and the region. ADEPT’s mission is to promote democratic values and support the active participation of citizens in public life.

Since its establishment in 2000, ADEPT has been at the forefront of efforts to promote good governance, electoral integrity, and civic engagement through research, advocacy, and public information. Since 2018, ADEPT has served as the Secretariat of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (CALC), a platform that brings together civil society organizations to ensure transparency, inclusion, and integrity in the electoral processes of the Republic of Moldova.

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Executive summary

Organization of polling stations abroad is fundamental to ensuring the constitutional right to vote of Moldovan citizens living outside the country. For the parliamentary elections scheduled on 28 September 2025, the authorities have approved the establishment of 301 polling stations across 41 countries, including four dedicated to postal voting. This represents an increase of approximately 30% compared to the 2024 parliamentary elections.

The decision-making process on the number and location of polling stations abroad is based on proposals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, trends in voter participation during previous elections, and data from preliminary registration. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the participation of Moldovan voters abroad in the last three national elections and to assess to what extent the existing electoral infrastructure meets their needs. The analysis aims to support informed decisions regarding the number and distribution of polling stations abroad for the 2025 parliamentary elections, using as references the legal framework, statistical data on voter turnout, the geographical concentration of Moldovan communities, and security considerations.

An examination of the last three national elections—the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections and the 2021 parliamentary elections—shows a steady and growing participation of voters abroad, which justifies the expansion of the electoral infrastructure. Countries with the largest communities of voters, such as France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Romania, consistently recorded several times more voters per polling station than the domestic average. In these cases, the principle of proportionality was strictly applied, and additional polling stations were established to reduce overcrowding and ensure equal access.

In Canada, the United States, and Spain, the geographical dispersion of voters required consideration of long distances between localities. In Russia and Israel, due to security concerns, the number of polling stations was strictly maintained at diplomatic missions. By contrast, in countries such as Austria, Greece, and the Netherlands, additional polling stations were proposed to respond to the needs of communities located far from capital cities. In countries with smaller but stable communities of 300 to 5,000 Moldovan voters, generally one or two polling stations were maintained within diplomatic missions, with only limited adjustments. Special cases, such as Belarus, raised questions due to unusual increases in voter turnout between the two rounds of the 2024 elections.

The increase in the number of polling stations abroad for the 2025 parliamentary elections reflects both the consistent growth of diaspora participation and the need to ensure equitable access. By expanding the voting infrastructure by 30% compared to 2024, the authorities seek to reduce overcrowding, address geographical challenges, and uphold the constitutional right to vote for Moldovan citizens abroad.

1. Legal Framework for Voting Abroad

The right of Moldovan citizens residing abroad to participate in elections has been guaranteed since 1994. Until 2010, voting was organized exclusively within diplomatic missions. With the adoption of Law No. 119 of 18 June 2010, the possibility of establishing polling stations outside diplomatic premises was introduced, subject to the consent of host state authorities and in line with Council of Europe recommendations on facilitating the vote of diaspora citizens.

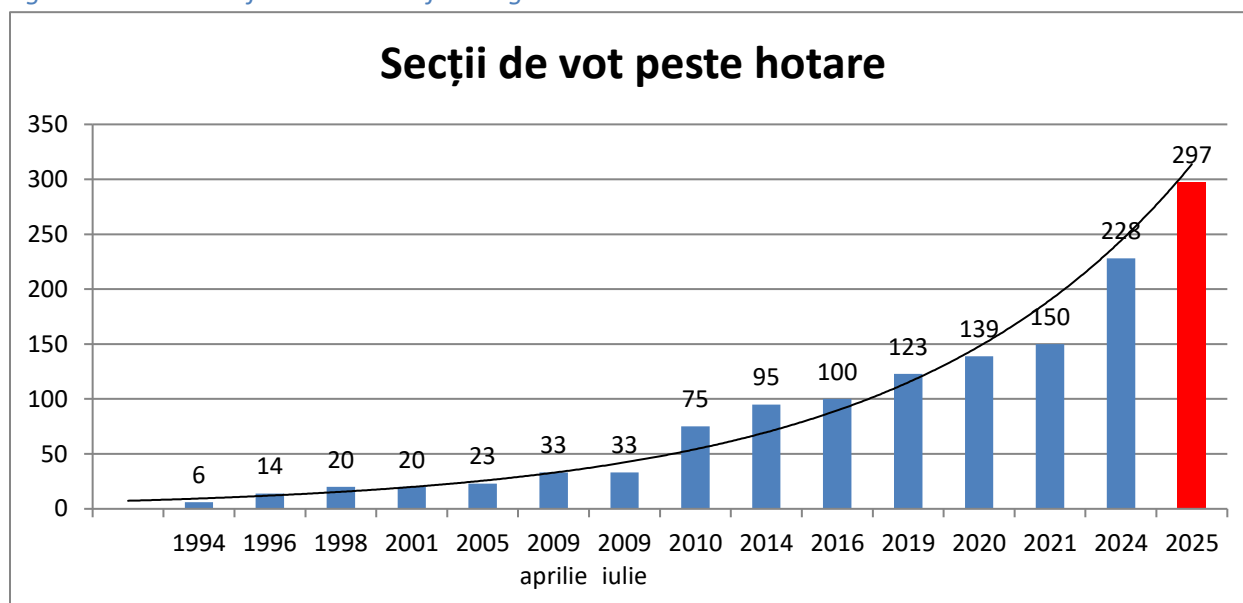
The new [Electoral Code](#), adopted on 8 December 2022, stipulates that polling stations abroad are established by decision of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), based on the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), in two types of locations: within diplomatic and consular missions, and in localities where at least 500 Moldovan citizens reside. The primary criteria for these decisions are the participation rates recorded in the last three national elections, complemented by data from preliminary registration.

In accordance with Article 39 of the Electoral Code, the MFA is tasked with drafting the preliminary list of polling stations abroad. The foundation of this list drew on the configuration used during the 2024 parliamentary elections, broadly maintaining the geographic distribution across countries and localities. However, the MFA adjusted both the number and locations of polling stations, taking into account the numerical concentration of Moldovan citizens, the average number of voters per station in previous elections, and geographic factors affecting accessibility, particularly the size of the host states and distances between urban centers.

A special category is represented by states affected by armed conflict, such as Israel, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine, where polling stations were proposed exclusively within diplomatic missions, with the possibility of subsequent expansion depending on security developments. At the same time, the preliminary list included, for the first time, polling stations in countries where none existed previously but where significant Moldovan communities are confirmed, such as Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, and Kazakhstan.

As a result, the MFA proposed, and the CEC approved, the establishment of [297 polling stations](#) across 41 countries and four additional stations for postal voting, representing an increase of about 30% compared to the 2024 parliamentary elections. This expansion is primarily driven by the higher participation of Moldovan citizens abroad in the 2024 presidential elections, which highlighted the need to strengthen the electoral infrastructure for the diaspora.

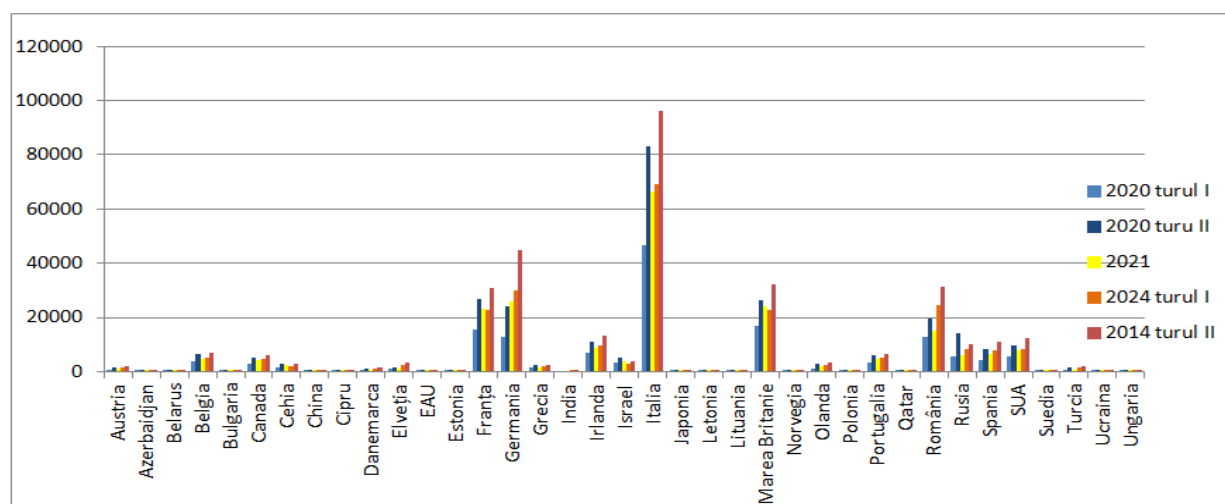
Figure 1. Evolution of the Number of Polling Stations Established Abroad in Moldovan Elections



2. Voting in Polling Stations Abroad (PSA) during the Last Three Elections

According to electoral legislation, the main reference point for establishing polling stations abroad (PSA) is the statistical data on voter participation in localities across different countries during the last three national elections: the 2020 presidential elections (two rounds), the 2021 parliamentary elections, and the 2024 presidential elections (two rounds). A panoramic overview of voter turnout in these three elections provides sufficiently informative insights to understand where Moldovan citizens abroad are located and in what proportions they are willing to participate in voting.

Figure 2. Panoramic overview of the number of voters in polling stations abroad during the last three elections



Accordingly, several groups of countries can be distinguished where citizens of the Republic of Moldova vote in larger or smaller numbers:

Group	Number of voters	Countries
Group I	20,000 – 100,000	France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Romania
Group II	5,000 – 15,000	Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, United States
Group III	1,000 – 5,000	Austria, Czechia, Denmark, Greece, Switzerland, Israel, Netherlands, Turkey
Group IV	300 – 1,000	Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine, Hungary
Group V	Up to 300	Azerbaijan, China, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, India, Japan, Qatar

For each election, the establishment of polling stations abroad is determined by a set of objective indicators and factors designed to ensure that citizens abroad can exercise their right to vote under optimal conditions. The first criterion is the average number of voters per polling station, which serves as a benchmark for increasing or decreasing the number of stations. This helps streamline the electoral process, reduce long queues observed in previous elections, improve the efficiency of electoral staff, and save voters' time, thereby also reducing the number of complaints.

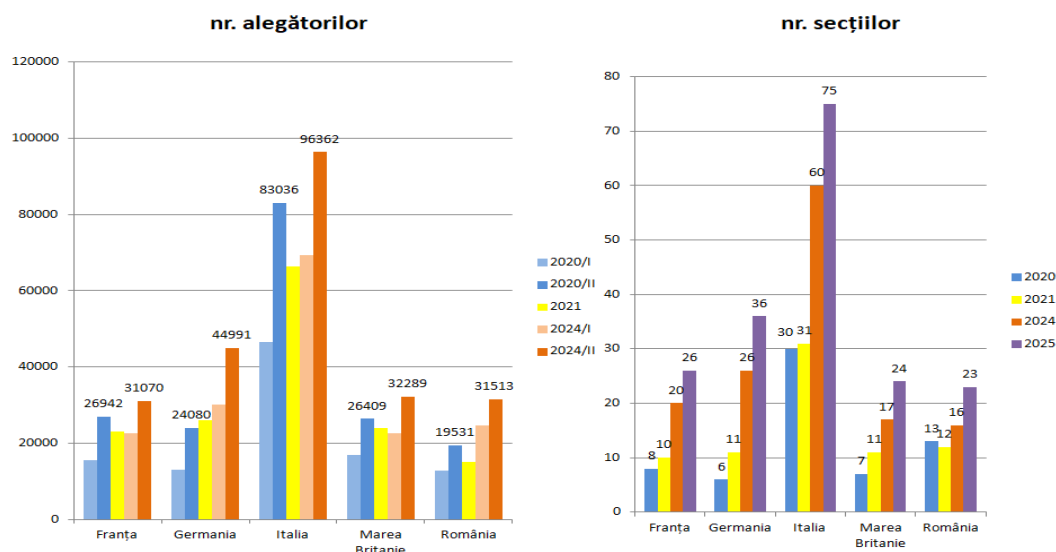
Another criterion is the clustering of localities with significant concentrations of Moldovan citizens, based on data provided by diplomatic missions, past electoral statistics, and preliminary registrations. This method makes it possible to identify the most accessible and efficient locations for opening polling stations.

Additionally, the distance between urban centers in geographically large states is a key factor in decision-making, especially in areas where there are communities of at least 500 Moldovan citizens.

3.1. Group I: Correlation between the Number of Voters and the Number of Polling Stations in the Last Three Elections

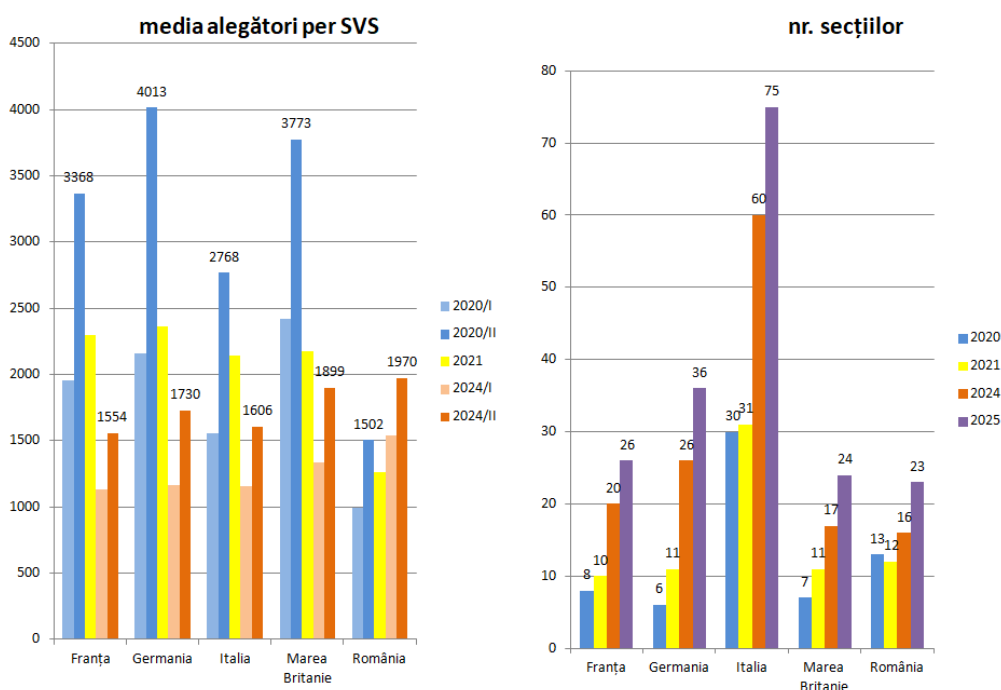
The five states included in Group I, where the number of voters ranges between 20,000 and 100,000, are all members of the European Union (EU). In the last three elections, the average number of voters per polling station abroad (PSA) in these countries was several times higher than the average recorded on the national territory (approximately 700 voters per station). Consequently, for the 2025 elections, the principle of proportionality is primarily applied in Group I states when establishing additional polling stations.

Figure 3. Group I States: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of PSA



The data presented in the previous figure indicate that the increase in the number of polling stations abroad (PSA) in Group I states generally follows the growth in voter participation observed in the preceding election. Thus, the proposal to increase the number of polling stations for the 28 September 2025 elections is based on the principle of proportionality. To confirm this trend, it is useful to compare the evolution of the average voter turnout per PSA with the dynamics of the increase in the number of polling stations.

Figure 4. Group I States: Evolution of the Average Number of Voters per PSA in Relation to the Number of Stations



An analysis of the data from the most recent presidential election (2024) shows that the average number of voters per polling station abroad (PSA) was relatively uniform, ranging between approximately 1,500 and 1,900 voters. This figure reflects the proper application of the principle of proportionality in increasing the number of polling stations.

3.2. Group II: Correlation between the Number of Voters and the Number of Polling Stations in the Last Three Elections

Group II is characterized by a distinct situation, determined by the large geographical dimensions of these countries and the distribution of pre-registered Moldovan voters. In these states, the principle of proportionality between the number of voters and the number of polling stations abroad is complemented by the criterion of distance between major concentrations of voters.

This particularity is especially relevant for Canada, the United States, and Spain, where voter communities are dispersed over large territories, but in the case of Spain, they show a relatively uniform concentration along the Iberian Peninsula coastline.

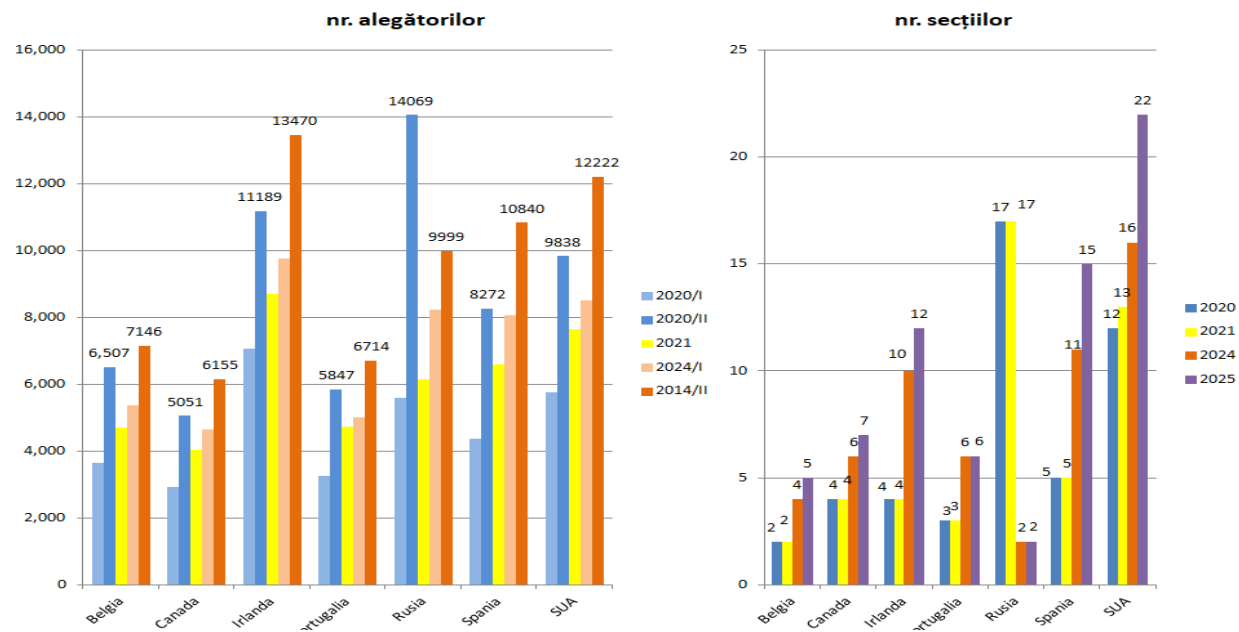
The Russian Federation constitutes an exception within Group II. In the 2024 presidential elections, for security reasons, the number of polling stations was reduced from 17 to only 2, both located within the diplomatic mission in Moscow. For this reason, the situation of the Russian Federation requires a separate analysis.

Figure 5. Distribution of Polling Stations Abroad in Canada, the United States, and Spain



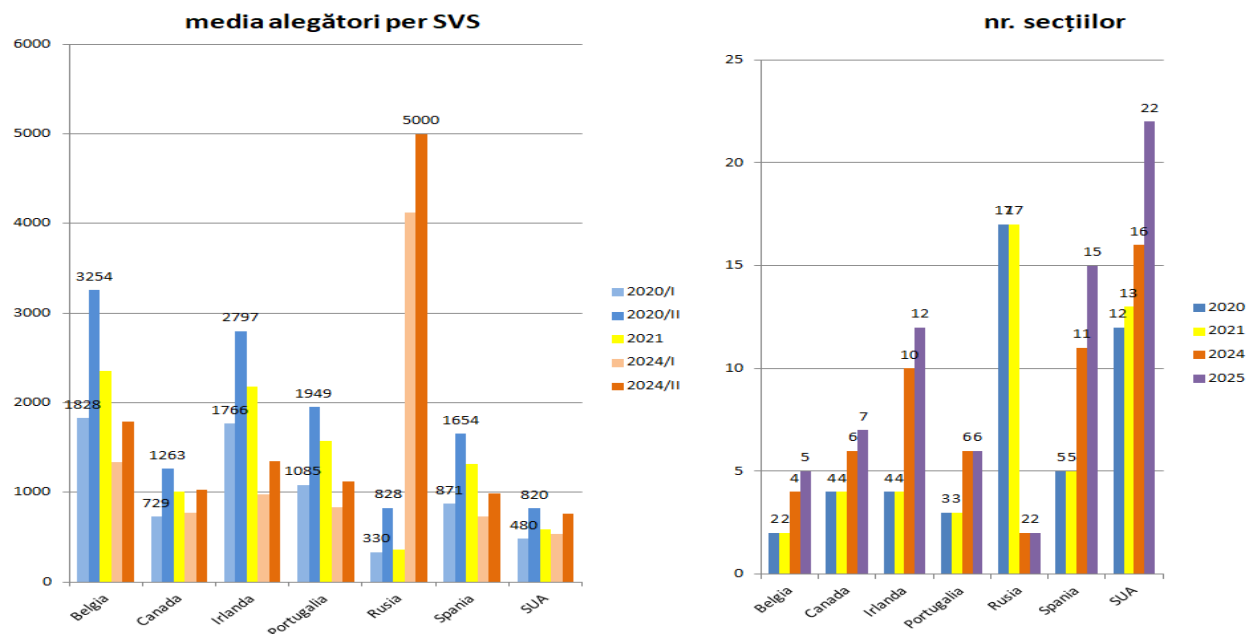
Nevertheless, for the Group II states, there is also a fairly strong correlation between the increase in the number of voters and the increase in the number of polling stations.

Figure 6. Group II: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of Polling Stations Abroad



The correlation between the number of voters per polling station abroad (PSA) and the number of such stations is indicative for initiatives either to open additional PSAs or to reduce their number.

Figure 7. Group II: Evolution of the Average Number of Voters per Polling Station Abroad in Relation to the Number of Stations



According to the data illustrated earlier, the average number of voters per polling station abroad (PSA) in Group II states ranged between approximately 800 and 1,800 voters. Consequently, a significant increase in the number of polling stations was proposed mainly for countries where the distances

between localities with Moldovan communities are considerable—particularly the United States and Spain.

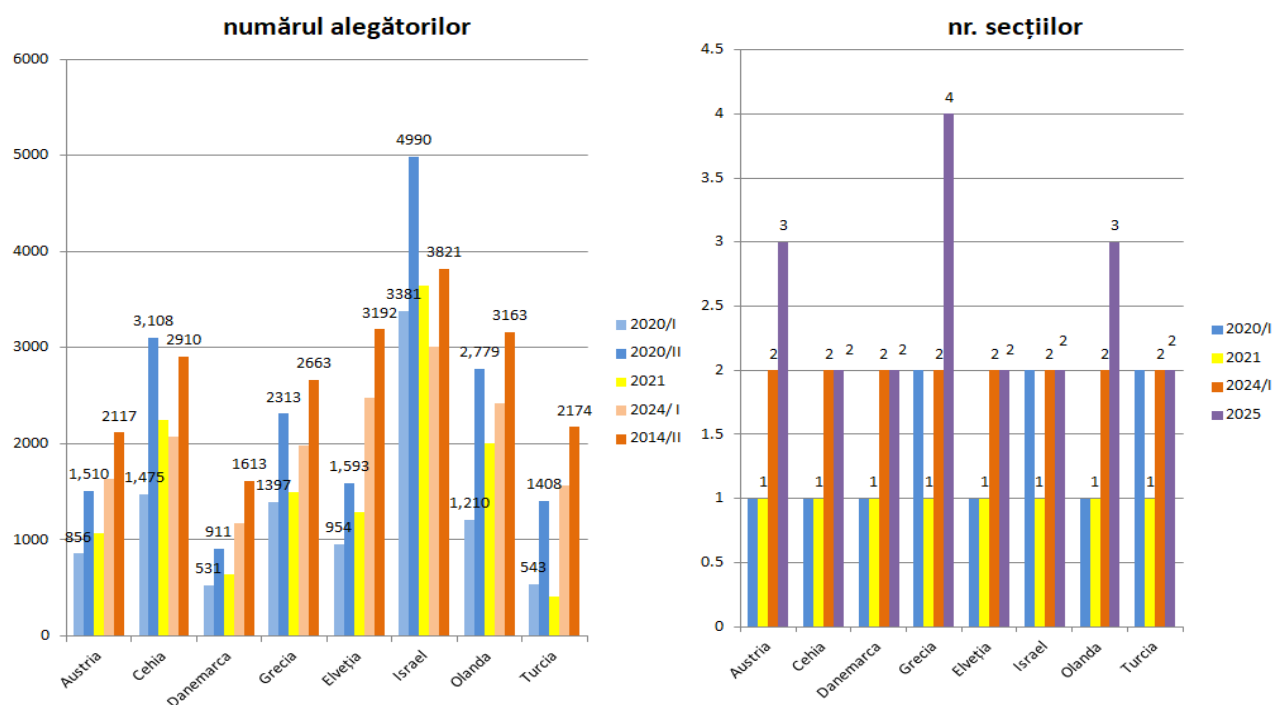
With regard to the Russian Federation, it has already been noted that the situation is a particular one, determined by security considerations. However, it is worth emphasizing that in the first round of the 2020 presidential elections and in the 2021 parliamentary elections, the average was about 350 voters per PSA. By contrast, in the 2024 presidential elections, during the second round, in the two polling stations organized within the diplomatic mission in Moscow, all available ballot papers were exhausted.

3.3. Group III: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of Polling Stations Abroad

Group III includes states where the number of voters present at elections ranges between 1,000 and 5,000. These are, in most cases, geographically small states, with the exception of Turkey, which stands out due to its large territory.

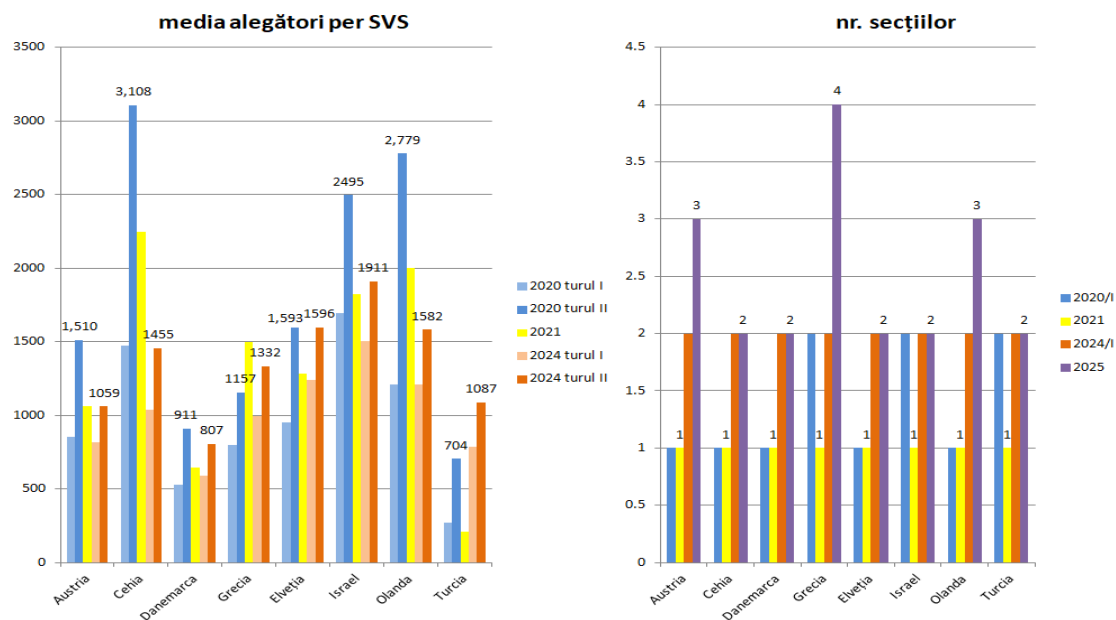
In these states, during the last three elections, the number of polling stations abroad varied between one and two units, usually established within diplomatic missions.

Figure 8. Group III: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of Polling Stations Abroad



The average number of voters per polling station abroad (PSA) for the Group III states in the most recent 2024 elections ranged from approximately 800 in Denmark to about 1,900 in Israel, where polling stations were established only within the diplomatic mission due to security considerations.

Figure 9. Group III: Evolution of the Average Number of Voters per Polling Station Abroad in Relation to the Number of Stations



The establishment of additional polling stations for the 28 September 2025 elections has been proposed for Austria – 1, Greece – 2, and the Netherlands – 1. In Austria, the supplementary polling station was proposed to be opened in the premises of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Moldova in the city of Klagenfurt am Wörthersee, located more than 300 km from Vienna. The establishment of two additional polling stations in Greece—on Crete Island and in the city of Thessaloniki, situated 500 km from Athens—is also justified by considerations of distance and transportation difficulties.

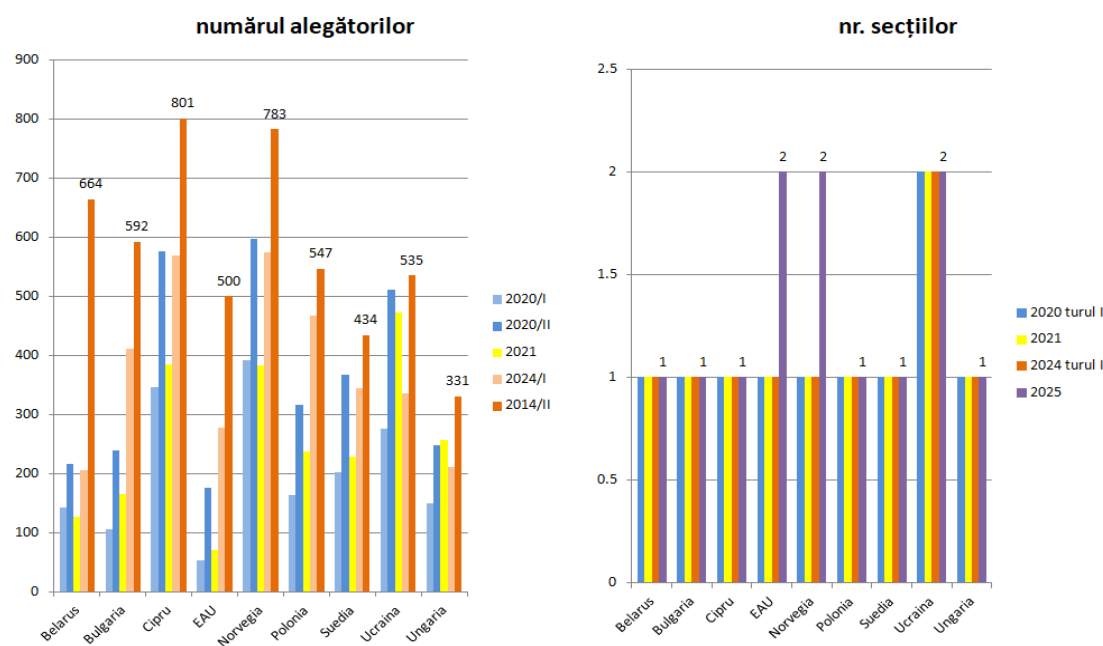
3.4. Group IV: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of Polling Stations Abroad

Group IV includes states where the number of voters ranges between 300 and 1,000. In previous elections, polling stations abroad (PSAs) in these states were established exclusively within diplomatic missions.

In the 2024 presidential elections, the number of voters in Group IV states registered a moderate increase of approximately 15–20% compared to the 2021 parliamentary elections. The same trend was observed between the first and second rounds of the 2024 presidential elections. An exception was Belarus, where voter participation in the second round was 230% higher compared to the first round. This phenomenon was interpreted as the result of [organized transportation of voters](#), which is prohibited under the Electoral Code.

For the 28 September 2025 elections, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has proposed the establishment of one additional polling station in Norway, given the country's large geographic size, and another in the United Arab Emirates, where the number of Moldovan citizens has increased significantly over the past decade.

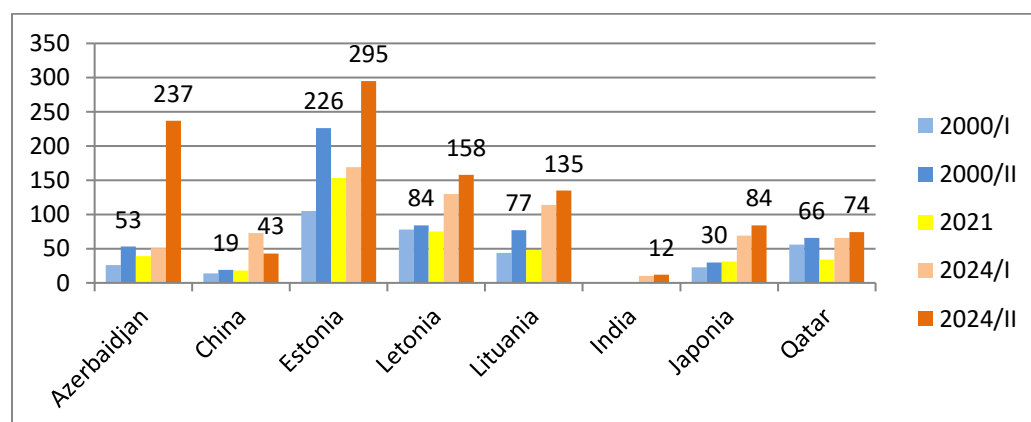
Figure 10. Group IV: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of Polling Stations Abroad



3.5. Group V: Number of Voters per Country Compared to the Number of Polling Stations Abroad

Group V (up to 300 voters) consists of states where, in previous elections, only a single polling station was established within diplomatic missions. The only remarkable aspect for this group of states is the number of voters in the second round of the 2024 presidential elections, which was approximately 370% higher than in the first round. This anomaly has the same explanation as in the case of Belarus—the organized transportation of voters, which is prohibited by the Electoral Code.

Figure 11. Group V: Number of Voters in Polling Stations Abroad



4. Conclusions

On 24 August 2025, the Central Electoral Commission decided to establish 301 polling stations abroad—297 for in-person voting on election day and four for postal voting—based on proposals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, voter participation trends in recent elections, and data from preliminary registration. The analysis confirms the necessity of expanding the electoral infrastructure for the diaspora, given the steady increase in participation by Moldovan citizens living abroad.

The increase in the number of polling stations was carried out proportionally to electoral participation levels, in order to ensure more equitable access to the voting process and to avoid the excessive overcrowding observed in previous elections.

At the same time, countries affected by armed conflict or facing heightened security risks—such as the Russian Federation, Israel, and Ukraine—are subject to special rules. In these cases, polling stations were maintained exclusively at the premises of diplomatic missions, with the possibility of future adjustments depending on the evolution of the security context.