

# Moldovan Court Bars Pro-Russian Party From Elections

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**The**  **Moscow Times**

CHISINAU, Moldova — Moldova's Appeals Court has ruled that a pro-Russian party cannot compete in Sunday's parliamentary elections on the grounds it is illegally funded from abroad.

The court ruled Thursday against Patria, led by Renato Usatii, who does business with Russia's state railways. The ruling can be contested at the Supreme Court.

This week, recordings emerged in which Usatii appeared to say he represented Russia's business interests in Moldova.

Usatii, who opposes Moldova joining the European Union and accuses the government of corruption, confirmed the tape was authentic but said he was game-playing in the conversation. He denies he receives funding from abroad and says the case is politically motivated.

His party is polling up to 13 percent in surveys. Pro-European parties are ahead of parties that

favor closer links to Russia.

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