

The Promo-LEX Observation Mission's First Findings Related to the Local Referendum from Chisinau Municipality and New Local Elections of 19 November 2017

Today, 2 November, Promo-LEX Association submitted its first Report on Monitoring the Local Referendum on the Dismissal of Chisinau General Mayor and the New Local Elections of 19 November 2017. Monitoring period: 4 October – 1 November 2017.

As regards the local referendum on the dismissal of Chisinau General Mayor, the first thing found by the Promo-LEX Observation Mission was that the legal framework is underdeveloped. Although the Electoral Code contains a separate chapter on local referenda, Promo-LEX found such gaps as: insufficient regulation of the status of the participant in referendum; restrictive approach on categories of participants in referendum; interpretability of the election campaign concept in the context of referendum; participation of compulsory-duty servicemen, voters holding domicile and residence permit at the same time.

The Chisinau Municipal Electoral Constituency Council (CMECC) registered 2 participants in the local referendum of 19 November 2017 – the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) and the Liberal Party (PL). At the same time, given the aforementioned gaps, Promo-LEX found that CMECC rejected Dorin Chirtoaca's application to be registered as a participant in the local referendum for the following reasons: the applicant violated the provisions of Article 41 of the Electoral Code

(submission of the registration file in person, by the applicant) and failed to comply with the provisions of CEC Decision No 1145 of 3 October 2017 (lack of individuals in the list of potential participants in the local referendum).

As regards the election campaign, Promo-LEX observers found that at least 58 electioneering activities (50 – PSRM, 8 – PL) were organised during the monitoring period. The most used promotion tools were meetings with voters – 29 cases, outdoor/promotional/online advertising in electioneering activity – 86 cases (81 – PSRM, 5 – PL). In addition, there was a case which can be regarded as one where administrative resources were used by a PSRM representative.

Starting from the activities carried out by the participants in referendum, in the first campaign week, PSRM reported revenue amounting to MDL 377,000 and expenses amounting to MDL 374,211.77, whereas PL reported MDL 0 (zero). On the other hand, Promo-LEX observers noted that PSRM carried out additional electioneering activities, estimated at no less than MDL 404,117, including MDL 101,861 for outdoor advertising, MDL 260,550 for promotional advertising, MDL 41,706 for volunteers' remuneration and other expenses.

At the same time, **as regards the local elections of 19 November 2017 in 10 level-one constituencies**, Promo-LEX Association found the following:

Constituency Councils registered 29 election candidates, of which 4 were independent candidates, whereas 25 were nominated by 8 political parties, as follows: PDM – 10 candidates, PSRM – 7 candidates, PN – 2 candidates, PPRM – 2 candidates, PCRM – 1 candidate, PL – 1 candidate, PNL – 1 candidate and PPEM – 1 candidate. PDM is the party that nominated its candidates in all constituencies. Most candidates were registered for the position of mayor in Singera t. (Chisinau mun.) – 6 candidates, fewest candidates – Lapusna v. (Hincesti d.) – 1 candidate.

During the monitored period, Promo-LEX noted a low level of activism among the election candidates. According to the information provided by Promo-LEX observers, at least 2 cases of electioneering activities were registered, both of them implied online candidate promotion via social networks (PL and PN). In addition, at least one case, which can be qualified as service provision during election campaign (PL), was reported. All these cases were found in Singera EC.

Promo-LEX OM noted the decrease in the level of financial reporting to CEC and level-one ECC. Thus, of 12 election candidates registered with CEC, only 2 (PDM, PSRM) submitted their financial statements for the first week of election campaign (20-27 October 2017). Only one election candidate (PSRM) reported revenue amounting to MDL 3,000 and expenses of – MDL 2,739.50 respectively, the other candidate reported MDL 0 (zero). On the other hand, none of the candidates submitted their financial statements to the level-one ECC or reports on lack of expenses.

The Monitoring Report No 1 also includes recommendations for the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, electoral bodies, participants in referendum and for the local public administration.

Under the 'Democracy, Transparency and Accountability' Program, as part of the civic and electoral education component, Promo-LEX Association organises the 'COME TO VOTE' campaign in the settlements where the new local elections will be held. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage people to vote and to promote informed and conscious voting among Moldovan citizens with a right to vote, in the settlements where the new local elections will be held. In the first round of election, public electoral debates will be organised in a few settlements that will be chosen subsequently.

Promo-LEX Observation Mission consists of 5 long-term observers who will monitor the electoral process in all

constituencies of the Republic of Moldova during 4 October – 19 November 2017. On the election day, Promo-LEX will delegate a short-term observer to each polling station. The observers involved in the monitoring process sign the Code of Conduct of the Promo-LEX Independent National Observer, assuming the commitment to act efficiently, in good faith and in a non-partisan manner.

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