

# **Promo-LEX Presented its First Report on Monitoring the New Local Elections of 20 May 2018**

On 19 April, current year, the Promo-LEX Observation Mission (OM) launched its first Report on Monitoring the New Local Elections of 20 May 2018. The mission appreciates the efforts of the electoral management bodies in organising the elections and implementing certain recommendations made by the previous election observation missions. At the same time, Promo-LEX reports several violations, particularly cases of obstructing the Promo-LEX observers' work, and cases that can be qualified as offering of electoral gifts, use of administrative resources, and violations of the legislation on financial reporting.

## **Increased activism of candidates in Chisinau and Balti municipalities**

All of the 89 activities found took place in Chisinau (73) and Balti (16) municipalities. The most frequent activities were: promotion/electioneering by using tents (32), distribution of materials with political/electoral content (21) and meetings with citizens/voters (12), etc. The activities concerned particularly: Ion Ceban/PSRM (43), Silvia Radu (18) and Andrei Nastase/PPPDA (10).

## **Cases that can be qualified as electoral gifts and use of administrative resources**

In the context of the political promotion/electoral activities, at least 2 situations of abusive use of administrative resources were found: when collecting signatures in support of Silvia Radu, and during the promotion

campaign of the PDM candidate from Volovița township. Additionally, Promo-LEX observers reported at least two cases that could be qualified as electoral gifts, and both of them involved the PSRM candidate for the position of Mayor of Balti and the charitable foundation of the First Lady 'Din Suflet' [From the Heart].

### **Funding of political/election campaign**

According to Promo-LEX estimates, at least MDL 478,890 were already spent on electoral activities by potential candidates before their registration. Promo-LEX also found that after the registration as election candidates, at least 2 of them (Ion Ceban – PSRM and Reghina Apostolova – PPS) spend MDL 160,441 for electoral activities: PSRM – MDL 151,703; PPS – MDL 8,738. At the same time, Promo-LEX reports that no election candidate opened an 'Electoral Fund' account, which implies the violation of the legislation by spending money that do not come from the 'Electoral Fund' account. CEC had not published any financial report of the election candidates/political parties by 17 April 2018. CEC must publish the financial reports within 48 hours of their receipt.

### **Independent candidates are treated unfairly**

Promo-LEX OM reiterates the need to force, like in case of presidential election, all candidates for the position of mayor to provide signatures in their support, and not only the independent ones. Also, according to the Association, the number of required signatures for Chisinau and Balti is exaggerated, compared to the number of signatures to be collected by candidates for the position of Member of Parliament in single-member constituencies. Regrettably, women do not benefit from advantages in collecting the signatures – compared to parliamentary elections.

### **Hate speech in the messages of election candidates**

In the context of the local elections of 20 May 2018, Promo-

LEX also monitored cases of hate, sexist and discriminatory speech in the messages of the candidates, as well as other forms of public intolerance. According to Promo-LEX, the PSRM candidate, Ion Ceban used hate speech in his messages. On the other hand, the candidate appointed by PPPDA, Andrei Nastase, was the target of sexist, discriminatory and violent messages.

### **Significant gap between the data from the State Registry of Voters and list of voters**

The OM believes that the significant and unjustified difference of 18,713 voters in 2016 and 17,368 voters in 2017 between the number of voters in the SRV and the one from the lists of voters generated by it in case of Chisinau municipality is concerning. Another concern is the gap of 4,214 voters between the SRV data and the lists of voters generated for Balti municipality during the 2016 Presidential Elections. We reiterate that in order to ensure the transparency and integrity of electoral processes, it is crucially important for the responsible authorities to explain clearly and conclusively the nature of these mutations.

The activity of the Election Observation Mission takes place during the election period and is performed by eight long-term observers (LTOs) in all the constituencies established for the new local elections of 20 May 2018. On the elections day, Promo-LEX will delegate one short-term observer (STO) in each of the 375 opened polling stations (PS). All the observers involved in the monitoring process are trained during the workshops organized by the Mission and sign the Code of Conduct of the Promo-LEX Independent National Observer, undertaking to act quickly, in good faith and in a non-partisan manner. The work of all the observers is coordinated by the central team of the Association.

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*The Observation Missions of the New Local Elections of 20 May*

*2018 is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and co-funded by the Justice and Human Rights Development of Soros Foundation-Moldova, for the component of monitoring the hate and discriminatory speech.*

**For more information, please contact:**

Axenia Chirilov, Communications Officer of the Promo-LEX Association;

GSM: 060 16 83 14;

Email: [axenia.chirilov@promolex.md](mailto:axenia.chirilov@promolex.md).