

# **The use of administrative resources and irregularities in electoral campaign financing persist, according to the second Promo-LEX report on monitoring the new local elections**

On May 3, 2018, the Promo-LEX Observation Mission (OM) launched its second monitoring report on the new local elections to be held on May 20, 2018. In the report, the OM reveals several issues, related to the activities of electoral bodies, financing of electoral campaigns, as well as to the use of administrative resources by electoral contenders, or for their benefit. Additionally, incitement to hatred and discrimination was a common practice over the monitored period.

## **Promo-LEX observers continue to be obstructed at District Electoral Councils of Chisinau**

Promo-LEX OM regrets the continued obstruction of Promo-LEX observers by the District Electoral Council no.1 in Chisinau. The observers are prohibited from making photocopies of electoral contenders' files, in compliance with the provisions of the legislation on the protection of personal data, neither are they offered copies of such records. In this context, we regret the refusal of the majority of the CEC members to include on the meeting agenda of April 24, 2018 and examine the proposal of three CEC members to amend the Regulation on the Status of Observers and the procedure of their

accreditation. This proposal aimed at explaining the observers' rights to make video / photo shootings and to harmonize the practice used by different electoral bodies in this respect.

### **Electoral bodies respect the schedule**

According to the observers' visits, the District Electoral Councils (DECs) worked in accordance with the approved work schedule and the deadline for setting up the Electoral Bureaus of the Polling Stations (EBPSs) has been respected by all DECs. The voters' lists were sent to the local public administration within the stipulated term.

### **231 cases of electoral promotion**

According to Promo-LEX observers, at least 231 activities of electoral promotion were held during the monitored period in only three localities: Chisinau – 142 (61.47%), Balti – 88 (38.10%) and Jora de Mijloc, Orhei District) – 1 (0.43%). Most of the activities were organized by the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) – at least 123 activities (53.25%); Dignity and Truth Platform Party (PPPDA) – 31 activities (13.42%), Our Party (PN) – 19 activities (8.23%), etc. The most widely and actively used promotional tools are meetings with citizens (50%) and tents (22%).

### **Electoral contenders do not report all campaign expenses**

In the first 2 weeks of the campaign (13 – 27 April 2018), 6 electoral contenders declared revenues of 3,715,140 lei and expenses of 3,476,068.46 lei. Promo-LEX revealed a bank transfer from the current account of the PSRM to the Electoral Fund account of the PSRM amounting to 955 940 lei, which can be qualified as a donation made by a legal entity. We remind in this context, that the ceiling of donations made by legal entities to the account of Electoral Fund for an election campaign is 100 average monthly salaries, i.e. maximum 615000 lei.

The observation mission also found expenditures made by Shor Party (PPS) in the village of Jora de Mijloc (Orhei District) estimated at 114,100 lei. It should be specified that the maximum ceiling of the Electoral Fund for Jora de Mijloc (Orhei District) is 93,504 lei.

The independent candidate Silvia Radu either did not submit the financial report within the specified period, i.e. until 30 April 2018, or it was not published by the DEC no.1 of Chisinau until the publication of the Monitoring Report no. 2.

Promo-LEX OM states that 8 electoral contenders (PSRM, PPP, PDM, PL, PPPDA, PN, PAS, PUN) failed to fully reflect the expenditures they had during the 2 weeks of the electoral campaign. The total amount of unreported expenses is estimated to be at least 672,489 lei.

### **Use of administrative resources by electoral contenders**

Promo-LEX observers reported at least 25 cases that can be qualified as use of administrative resources: 10 meetings with voters, held in kindergartens during working hours (PSRM-7, PN-2, independent candidate (IC) Elena Grițco-1); 8 meetings with the voters organized on the premises of medical institutions during working hours (PSRM 5 -, PPȘ – 1, PL – 1, PPPDA – 1); 5 meetings with voters organized within the premises of state enterprises during working hours (PSRM – 3, PN – 2); 1 case of involvement of public authorities in the contender's electoral activities during working hours (PUN); 1 case of unauthorized involvement of the electoral contender Silvia Radu in the activities of the Chisinau City Hall.

A special case of the use of administrative resources was the involvement of the President of the Republic of Moldova in the promotion of the PSRM electoral contender, Ion Ceban, which can be described as electoral agitation using the image of public authorities.

### **Incitement to hatred and discrimination present in contenders'**

## **speeches**

Promo-LEX OM continued to monitor cases of incitement to hatred and discrimination in contenders' speeches. According to the information gathered, there were at least 7 cases, when electoral contenders were targeted by such messages and two cases, where the contenders generated such speeches.

As for the contenders, who have been affected by various forms of intolerance, we refer to 4 politicians. Those targeted in messages that incite hatred and discrimination are the PPPDA candidate for Chisinau mayor general Andrei Năstase (in 4 cases out of 7), followed by Valeriu Munteanu, Ion Ceban and Silvia Radu (1 case each).

On the other hand, Valeriu Munteanu, Liberal Party candidate for the position of mayor general of Chisinau, twice delivered speeches that incite hatred and promote age-related stereotypes.

**Note:** Monitoring period April 18 – May 1, 2018. The finances of the electoral contenders were monitored for April 13-27, 2018.

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