

DECLARATION of the Promo-LEX Association regarding the electoral debate of the public television station Moldova 1, dated 12.11.2020

STATEMENT

Chisinau, 13.11.2020

Since 2016, Promo-LEX Association has been cooperating with Teleradio-Moldova public broadcaster (hereinafter Teleradio-Moldova). In particular, the signatories of the Partnership Agreement organised together a series of electoral debates, offering equal conditions for all election contenders.

This cooperation was driven by the need for joint efforts to promote informed and conscious voting, civil and electoral participation of citizens, transparency of the governance process, as well as accountability of political stakeholders and candidates during election campaigns.

Throughout the whole cooperation period, Teleradio-Moldova staff have shown professionalism, helping establish a discussion platform that allowed exchange of opinions and delivery of unbiased information to the population.

Unfortunately, we found that Teleradio-Moldova violated the provisions of its Partnership Agreement with Promo-LEX Association at the last debates for the second round of the

election, held on Thursday, 12 November 2020 on public TV broadcaster Moldova 1.

It is for the first time when the persons in charge of electoral debates failed to inform Promo-LEX Association about the unilateral changes to the mutually agreed script on how to organise debates at Teleradio-Moldova, thus violating the provisions and principles of the Partnership Agreement.

We present below some aspects revealing these inadequacies, which cast a shadow on the unbiased and non-partisan nature of the public TV broadcaster Moldova 1, in the organisation of the electoral debates on 12.11.2020:

1. Contrary to the initial scrip of the debates, the Declaration and the Information Letter for candidates dated 12.11.2020, the candidates' supporters were allowed to attend, though previously an agreement was reached that no viewers would be present in the room due to public health restrictions.
2. According to the Teleradio-Moldova policy, if a candidate is missing, the reserved time is not recovered. Thus, though initially one hour was planned for both candidates, the moderators allowed for the whole show to be dedicated to one single candidate. Or, according to the public announcement made by public TV broadcaster Moldova 1, the intention was to allocate 30 minutes for each candidate. In reality, however, the whole show lasted more than 60 minutes.
3. Though it was stated that candidates would have 12 minutes to answer to experts' questions, the time offered was extended up to 20 minutes.

This can be interpreted as an intention to favour a certain election contender, provided that a series of concerted actions were found between an election contender and the management of public TV broadcaster Moldova 1. The way how the debates of 12.11.2020 were organised is a violation of best

practices of organising electoral debates on a public TV station.