

Promo-LEX Election Observation Mission for the Presidential Election in the Republic of Moldova of 1 (15) November 2020 | Polling Stations Opening

15 November 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m.

*Promo-LEX Observation Mission of the Presidential Election in the Republic of Moldova of 1 (15) November 2020 informs that as of 9:00 a.m. the Mission had **received 105 incident reports** from observers, this press release containing information on **62 incidents** processed by the central team of Promo-LEX Mission at that time.*

*At the first round of the presidential election of 1 November 2020, Promo-LEX OM had **received by 9.00 a.m. 64 incident reports** from observers, the **press release having included 35 incident reports** the central team had processed.*

Monitoring by the Promo-LEX OM of the second round of presidential election

On the election day for the second round of the presidential election of 1 (15) November 2020, as in the first round, Promo-LEX will delegate one short-term observer (STO) in each of the 608 polling stations (PSs) selected by Promo-LEX OM from a sample established by a sociological company.

Moreover, a static observer will be assigned to each of the 42 polling stations where voters from the transnistrian region will cast their vote.

The electoral process in the polling stations, in their immediate vicinity and the access routes to the polling stations where the voters from the transnistrian region will vote, will be monitored also by 80 mobile teams of observers.

Also, special consideration will be given to polling stations abroad, where it is planned to delegate static observers in about 61 polling stations.

Compared to the first round, Promo-LEX seconded, for the second round, four teams of observers trained in monitoring public assemblies.

Incidents flagged up upon opening of polling stations:

Promo-LEX Observation Mission of the Presidential Election in the Republic of Moldova of 1 (15) November 2020 finds,

Restricting the observers' access or preventing the free observation process at the polling station – 1 case.

- **PS 16/1 Edinet, Edinet.** The Promo-LEX observer was restricted free observation of the polling station. He was not allowed to move around inside the polling station and was also prohibited from filming or taking pictures although he sought the Chairperson's permission for that three times at around 7:05 a.m. when the flow of voters was not abundant.

Deficient operation of Elections SAIS (suspended functionalities; situations where Elections SAIS showed that the voter had voted, although the latter claimed he had not) – 13 cases.

- **PS 1/105 Chisinau, Buiucani.** One operator was not able to connect. The PEB Chairperson announced CEC about it, but the answer was that the network was overloaded and couldn't be solved at that time.
- **PS 1/198, Chisinau, Rascani.** The Elections SAIS operators were not able to enter the system for about 20-40 minutes. When the PEB Chairperson made a call to CEC, the issue was solved. The voting process wasn't put on hold. The voters were recorded on a sheet of paper and were later entered into the Elections SAIS.
- **PS 1/7 Chisinau, Botanica.** It took Elections SAIS operators 30 minutes to enter the system. The PEB Chairperson announced CEC about it and all technical issues were addressed.
- **PS 12/28, Criuleni, Magdacesti.** The operators were not able to enter Elections SAIS between 06:00 – 7:27 in the morning. The voting process was not halted. The voters were recorded on a sheet of paper. The PEB Chairperson was trying to have the issue solved.
- **PS 4/03, Anenii Noi, Anenii Noi.** Both operators struggled with entering the Elections SAIS, the first one – between 7:15 and 7:42 a.m., and the second one – between 7:30 and 7:40 a.m. The voting process was not halted during those 30 minutes. The voters were recorded on a sheet of paper. The problem was solved.
- **PS 18/026, Floresti, Cunicea.** One voter was not found in Elections SAIS, but she was on the lists of voters. She cast her vote without having been registered in Elections SAIS. According to the Promo-LEX ST0 – the woman appeared in the Elections SAIS in that PS in the first round, however this time she had been assigned to another PS in Cunicea.
- **PS 01/107, Chisinau, Buiucani.** The Elections SAIS did not work between 7:00 and 7:18 a.m. (operator 1)/7:30 a.m. (operator 2). The operators checked the internet connection and restarted the program a number of times. Both operators started their work later than 7.00 a.m.

because of this.

- **PS 25/40 Orhei, Furceni.** The internet was gone at 7:05 a.m., as was connection with Elections SAIS. The internet provider was called. The voting process was not interrupted. The voters were recorded on paper. It was only at 8:30 a.m. that the issue was solved and that the operators uploaded the data into Elections SAIS.
- **PS 10/7, Causeni.** There was no internet between 06:59 and 7:15 a.m.
- **PS 10/2, Causeni.** Internet was gone at 07:05 am, as was connection to Elections SAIS. One Moldtelecom engineer looked into it. One of the computers was connected to internet in 30 minutes, while the second one was not even after an hour of attempts.
- **PS 32/31 Stefan Voda, Talmaza.** The PS was opened as late as 7:40 a.m. because of the impossibility to enter Elections SAIS. The voters were being registered on paper by hand between 07:40 and 07:50 a.m. until the PS got one computer working (however it disconnected every now and then). Connecting the second computer was still impossible even after 8:00 a.m.
- **PS 10/36 Causeni, Plop Stiubei.** There was no internet between 7:35 and 7:40 a.m. Internet connection was back on after the program was restarted.
- **PS 32/10 Stefan Voda, Cioburciu.** Impossible to connect to Elections SAIS. The support of an engineer was sought in this regard.

Presence of advertising materials, electoral billboards and posters in the vicinity of the polling station (within the area of 100 m from the PS) – 4 cases.

- **PS 32/001 Stefan Voda, Stefan Voda.** There's was a board with electoral posters in support of a contender in the radius of 100 m from the PS.
- **PS 29/9 Soroca, Soroca Municipality.** A billboard of a candidate was across the PS and some small leaflets of a

candidate were noticed at the PS entrance.

- **PS 31/001, Soldanesti, Soldanesti.** There was a board with electoral posters of a candidate some 50 meters away from the PS. Once informed about it, PEB members removed the electoral posters away.
- **PS 32/030 Stefan Voda, Talmaza.** A banner in favour of a candidate was hung on a store some 50 meters away from the PS. When the observers entered the store, the owner removed the banner off the wall of the store, but did not remove from the door the election posters of that same candidate. He claimed that the people who hanged the banner had said that it wasn't a violation.

Unjustified presence of unauthorised persons inside or within 100 m from the polling station – 3 cases

- **PS 07/011 Cahul, Cahul.** People who introduced themselves as representatives of contenders, entitled to the right to vote, showed up at the PS, but without carrying the required credentials. The PEB Chairperson said he hadn't received the credentials from DEC. Subsequently, the PEB members attempted to settle the problem by going to DEC.
- **PS 18/002, Floresti, Floresti.** A group made of three people have been seen less than 100 m away from the PS between 7:30 and 8:37 a.m. One of the three, who had already voted, handed the observer of a candidate a bag and told him he was going to use it when he goes around with the mobile ballot box. This group can be seen around and moving in the vicinity of the polling station.
- **PS 18/023, Floresti, Cuhurestii de Sus.** There was an unauthorised person inside the PS at 7:30 a.m., wearing IGSU uniform (emergency response). The PEB Chairperson explained that the man was there to discharge policing duties to protect the ballot papers.

Interrupted video recording of electoral procedures for polling station opening or procedures of ballot papers counting – 8 cases.

- **PS 1/192, Chisinau, Rascani.** It was found at 6:50 a.m. that the video camera didn't work. The PEB Chairperson announced CEC, but no measures were taken about it.
- **PS 1/100 Chisinau, Buiucani.** The video camera doesn't record. The PEB Chairperson informed that the camera didn't work.
- **PS 37/11, transnistrian region, Anenii Noi, Varnita.** The Promo-LEX observer reported that the camera hadn't been turned on upon the sealing of boxes and distribution of ballot papers. It was placed behind the operators' backs.
- **PS 20/002 Hincesti, Hincesti.** The camera was not turned off at 7:00 a.m. once the PS opened. At 8:25 a.m. the camera was still on and recording the voting process.
- **PS 36/40, ATUG, Cazacilia.** The video camera hadn't been turned on when the PS preparations were underway because the person in charge of it was late. When the PEB Chairperson became aware of it, he turned the camera on but that was almost at the end of the preparations for opening the PS.
- **PS 11/2 Cimislia.** The PEB Chairperson turned the camera off at 7:50 a.m.
- **PS 27/25 Riscani, Hiliuti.** The camera was not turned off after the PS was opened for voters to enter. The recording was stopped when the people attending the process raised this issue.
- **PS 27/015 Riscani, Braniste.** The camera hadn't been turned off after the PS was opened. It was still recording at 8:10 a.m.

Electioneering or black PR within the radius of 100 m and/or near the polling station to influence the voters – 2 cases.

- **PS 1/87 Chisinau, Buiucani.** As soon as he came out of

the voting booth, a voter showed his ballot paper and announced out loud that he had voted for a particular candidate. The PEB Chairperson warned the voter about electioneering being prohibited.

- **PS 06/002 Briceni, Briceni.** There is an unauthorised person right next to the PS entrance handing out masks to voters and talking to them. That person was a supporter of one of the candidates.

Ballot boxes were not sealed according to the legal procedures/tearing/damage or absence of seals on ballot boxes – 19 cases.

- **PS 1/19 Chisinau, Botanica.** The ballot box was sealed by 3 seals. At 6:47 a.m., a PEB member ripped off accidentally one seal on a stationary ballot box.
- **PS 1/100 Chisinau, Buiucani.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed by only 2 seals because there were reportedly few seals in the polling station.
- **PS 1/199 Chisinau, Rascani.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed by only 2 seals each. The PEB Chairperson explained that the seals brought to the PS were insufficient.
- **PS 1/221 Chisinau, Rascani.** A stationary ballot box (backup) was sealed with one seal, 2 stationary ballot boxes were sealed with 3 seals each. The PEB Chairperson informed that the received an insufficient number of seals (10).
- **PS 37/38 transnistrian region, Rezina.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed only with 3 seals. According to PEB Chairperson this is the number of seals distributed by CEC.
- **PS 37/22 transnistrian region, Criuleni.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed only with 3 seals. According to PEB Chairperson this is the number of seals distributed by CEC.
- **PS 1/3 Chisinau, Botanica.** The stationary ballot box was

sealed with only 3 seals. PEB chairperson mentioned that according to the regulation, it was allowed to apply from two to four seals.

- **PS 33/008 Taraclia, Tvardita.** One of the three stationary ballot boxes was not sealed. The PEB members believe it will not be used during the day and they decided not to seal it. The ballot box is placed in a visible place of the PS.
- **PS 36/004 Gagauzia ATU, Comrat.** PEB members found that the seals were not enough to seal all the ballot boxes. As a result, PEB members decided not to use this ballot box during the voting process. The ballot box was stored in an auxiliary room of the PS. The observer mentioned that PEB members prepared a protocol as regards this situation.
- **PS 1/154, Chisinau, Ciocana.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed by only 3 seals. The PEB Chairperson mentioned that they received few seals.
- **PS 1/9 Chisinau, Botanica.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed by only 3 seals. The Chairperson mentioned that he left a seal for backup.
- **PS 1/411, Romania, Galati.** The stationary ballot box was sealed by only 2 seals.
- **PS 13/25, Donduseni, Tirnova.** The PS received on 10 seals while it has 2 stationary and 3 mobile ballot boxes. As a result, the stationary ballot boxes were sealed with only 2 seals each, invoking the lack of enough seals for all the ballot boxes.
- **PS 35/8, Ungheni.** Both stationary ballot boxes were not sealed according to the rules: one was sealed with only 3 seals, and the second – with 2 seals. The reason invoked was the insufficient number of seals.
- **PS 10/4, Causeni.** The stationary ballot box was sealed with only 2 seals. The PEB Chairperson communicated that it is fine and it wouldn't have a problem with applying 2 seals instead of 4.
- **PS 27/1 Riscani.** Only one of those 3 ballot boxes inside

the PS is sealed with 4 seals, while the other two – with 2 seals each. The PEB Chairperson explained that they received that number of seals from CEC.

- **PS 27/2 Riscani.** The stationary ballot boxes were sealed only with 3 seals and the reason invoked was the fact that they received only 10 seals from CEC.
- **PS 06/002 Briceni, Briceni.** The ballot boxes were sealed only with 3 seals. PEB Chairperson said that they didn't receive the necessary number of seals. Later on, the necessary seals were brought from DEC and the ballot boxes were sealed according to the rules.
- **PS 18/022, Floresti, Cuhurestii de Sus.** The mobile ballot box was not sealed. PEB members said they would seal it when the ballot box will leave the PS.

Deficiencies in the lists of voters (gaps between addresses; deceased voters; signatures instead of other people) – 2 cases.

- **PS 1/218, Chisinau, Riscani.** A voter noted that his signature was put down in the main list of voters, which confirmed he voted in the first round of elections. The voter claims he didn't vote in the first round of elections. The stamp 'voted' was not applied in the loose leaf.
- **PS 1/228, Chisinau, Riscani.** At 8:10 a.m., a voter noted that the main lists of voters contained the name of a deceased person who had the same residence as the voter.

Taking pictures of the ballot papers, other violations of the secret ballot (submission of ID card on the basis of which the voter had already voted, inappropriate laying out of booths because of which one could see who other voters cast their vote for) – 4 cases.

- **PS 1/100 Chisinau, Buiucani.** At 7:55 a.m. one voter took

a picture of the ballot paper. All the members of PEB noted that, but no one reacted immediately.

- **PS 1/261, Chisinau, Sangera.** At 8:10 a.m., two voters who were showing to each other pictures with their ballot papers were noted outside the polling station.
- **PS 1/100 Chisinau, Buiucani.** At 8:31 a.m. one voter took a picture of the ballot paper. A member of PEB asked the voter to delete the picture but the voter ignored the request.
- **PS 1/11 Chisinau, Botanica.** At 8:14 a.m. one voter took a picture of the ballot paper. The photo was deleted at the request of PEB Chairperson.

Failure to observe COVID-19 protection and prevention measures – 3 cases.

- **PS 1/292, Chisinau, Stauceni.** At 7:04 a.m., more voters than the number of voting booths were inside the PS. The PEB Chairperson did nothing about it.
- **PS 18/023, Floresti, Cuhurestii de Sus.** PEB members do not comply with COVID-19 protection rules – do not wear masks/wear them incorrectly.
- **PS 32/33 Stefan Voda, Volintiri.** The anti-pandemic rules are not observed. Thus, for a number of 5 voting booths, 7 voters are allowed to enter the PS.
- **Electricity outages – 1 case.**
- **PS 13/25, Donduseni, Tirnova.** At 7:10 a.m. the electricity was out in the PS. After approximately 20 minutes, PEB Chairperson managed to restart it.

Unjustified group voting (two or more voters) – 1 case.

- **PS 32/3 Stefan Voda.** Two voters were in the voting booth (husband and wife). PEB Chairperson solved the issue.

Others – 1 case.

- **PS 32/10 Stefan Voda, Cioburciu.** A ballot paper with the mark 'voted' on it was found in the voting booth. This

one was moved to the side, and the PEB Chairperson was standing by the booth in order to ensure the security of the respective ballot paper. After discussing with the people in the PS, PEB members identified the voter who left the ballot paper in the voting booth. He was called by a PEB member, but this one did not admit initially that he forgot his ballot paper in the voting booth. Nonetheless, after he discussed with the PEB Chairperson, the voter decided to assume the case and throw the ballot paper in the ballot box.

The press release is developed as part of the Observation Mission for the Elections of the President of the Republic of Moldova on 1 (15) November 2020, conducted by Promo-LEX Association with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) via the 'Democracy, Transparency and Accountability' Program, the Good Governance Department of Soros Foundation-Moldova under 'Monitoring the Presidential Elections of 1 November 2020' Project, and the Council of Europe under 'Support for civic observation of 2020 Presidential Election in polling stations abroad'. 'Hate speech' component is supported by Justice and Human Rights Department of Soros Foundation-Moldova under 'Consolidation of a platform for the development of activism and education in the area of human rights in Moldova – stage IV' Project.

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If there are any discrepancies between the text in Romanian and its translation, the provisions formulated in Romanian shall prevail.

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