

Worrying findings of Promo-LEX Observation Mission in the Second Monitoring Report for the Early Parliamentary Elections of 11 July 2021

Promo-LEX Association has launched today the Second Report of Promo-LEX Observation Mission (OM) for the early Parliamentary Elections of 11 July 2021. The report contains electoral findings reported by observers between 12 and 25 May 2021.

The main aspects covered by the report:

The perpetuated tendencies in the development of the electoral campaign



As of 26 May 2021, CEC have registered eight contenders (six parties and two electoral blocs), and other two files are under review. The minimum representation quota for both sexes (40%) was respected by all candidates. We also mention that, in all eight cases, the positioning of the candidates on the lists was done in compliance with the legal provisions, at least four candidates for every ten places.

In this context, Promo-LEX OM found that most of the contenders started campaigning without registering their trustees.

At the same time, according to Promo-LEX observers, some (potential) electoral contenders started campaigning before the legal term. Thus, at least 15 activities with electoral overtones (without any urging to vote) were reported to be conducted by contenders/potential contenders, as well as 18 cases of urging to vote for a certain electoral contender/potential electoral contender (17 – Electoral bloc of Communists and Socialists (BECS), 1– ‘ALLIANCE FOR ROMANIANS UNIFICATION’ (AUR) Political Party.

At the same, since their formal registration for the electoral run, 46 activities were reported to be conducted by four electoral contenders between 21 and 25 May 2021 – PAS (80%), BECS (11%), BERU (7%) and PPS (2%). The most popular activities included dissemination of electoral materials (63%) and meetings with voters (28%).

Promo-LEX observers also reported at least 121 cases (BECS) that can be regarded as use of administrative resources. Of them, in 120 cases public sector employees were involved in campaigning activities and one case was about taking merits for services funded with public money.

In addition, at least 2 cases were reported that can be regarded as gifts with electoral impact (BECS – 1, BERU – 1), as well as one case that can be regarded as involving the President of the Republic of Moldova in campaigning for an electoral contender (PAS).

The electoral contenders for the early Parliamentary Elections may spend 4 times less money, compared with the 2019 Parliamentary Elections

During the reporting period, CEC established the general threshold of MDL 20,707,700 for the funds that can be

transferred on the 'Electoral Fund' account of the electoral contender and of the initiative group, which is four times less than for the 2019 Parliamentary Elections (MDL 86,871,856). The significant difference between the amounts established in 2019 and 2021 was caused by the amendments made to the Electoral Code (August 2019) and the set threshold of 0.05% of the forecast revenue of the state budget for the respective year.

According to Promo-LEX observers, as of 25 May 2021 CEC has not published on its website any report of the political parties that should make transfers on the 'Electoral Fund' account. In addition, only PAS presented information on opening the 'Electoral Fund' account, though this information should be published by the deadline of 26 May 2021.

Pre-registration – a tool by which citizens can influence the number and geography of polling stations

We want to draw attention to the increase in the number of preliminary registrations by about 40,000 as compared with the presidential elections of November 2020. According to Promo-LEX estimates, in the last two weeks, in at least 8 countries, the number of polling stations changed only on the basis of the indicator regarding the number of preliminary registrations.

As regards the distribution of polling stations per countries, according to Promo-LEX estimates and if we take into account those 150 PS budgeted by CEC as a calculation basis, the highest number of polling stations will be established in Italy (28), Russian Federation (21), Germany (13), United Kingdom (11), France (9) and Romania (9).

Also, based on the 191 PS proposed by MFAEI, the highest number of PS will be established in Italy (37), Russian Federation (29), Germany (17), United Kingdom (16), France (12) and Romania (11).

Risks to the smooth organisation and conduct of the election

Promo-LEX OM draws the attention to some uncertainties related to the constitutionality of Article 51(4) of the Electoral Code. This refers to the prohibition to hold candidates to account or impose any sanctions during the electoral period without the consent of the electoral body that registered them. Given that a provision with exact the same form and content as Article 51(4) of the Electoral Code has been declared previously non-constitutional, Promo-LEX OM believes that the above article should not and may not be applied by authorities, and the electoral contenders may not use these safeguards.

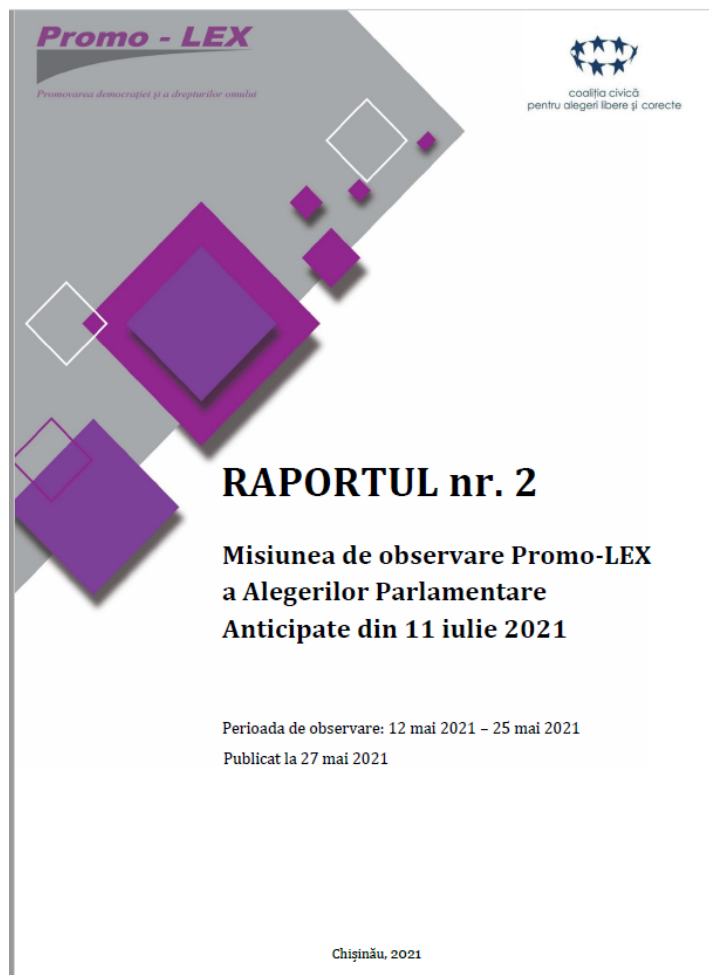
Promo-LEX OM also underscores that, though the election organisation and electoral campaigning have already started, clear measures of preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 infection in electoral context have not been approved yet. The lack of such measures increases the risk of higher COVID-19 infection rates.

There is also no Government Decision to ensure full coverage of expenses for the organisation of the early parliamentary elections. We reiterate the concern related to the uncertainty in the central public authorities' capacity to identify enough funds for a smooth conduct of the elections.

During the monitored period, the Central Electoral Commission approved 63 decisions, including one regulation, and two others were adjusted to the legal norms specific to the proportional system. At the same time, according to Promo-LEX, at least five more CEC regulations need to be adapted to the amendments to the Electoral Code.

According to our findings, during the current elections the LPAs again ignore their duties to appoint members of electoral bodies. Promo-LEX OM identified at least seven DEC II (19%) with no members appointed by level-two LPAs.

Another election affected by incitement to hate and discrimination



On the basis of the information submitted by monitors between 11 and 24 May 2021, we identified at least 23 cases of hate speeches and incitement to discrimination in the public space, in the media and in the online environment of the Republic of Moldova.

Thus, six electoral contenders/politicians used non-tolerant expressions: Renato Usatii (BERU) – five cases and Vladimir Voronin (BECS), Octavian Ț (BE PUN), Vasile Bolea (BECS) and Vladimir Odnostalco (BECS) – one case each.

Of the 23 cases of hate speech or incitement to discrimination identified, 9 cases targeted contenders/potential contenders/politicians: Vladimir Voronin (BECS) – 2 cases, Maia Sandu (President of the Republic of Moldova) – 2 cases, Natalia Albot (activist and journalist on the electoral list of PAS, who withdraw her candidacy on 21.05.2021 / 2 cases), Igor Dodon (BECS), Dumitru Diacov (PDM) and Vasile Bolea

(BECS) – one case each.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

The report is developed as part of the Observation Mission for the Early Parliamentary Elections of 11 July 2021 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, as well as the Embassy office of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Moldova through the project "Support for informing citizens and civic observation of Early Parliamentary Elections in 2021 in the polling stations created by voters in the Transnistrian region". '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.

For more details, please contact:

Inga Stegarescu, Press Officer of Promo-LEX Association;

GSM: 069 26 96 84;

E-mail: inga.stegarescu@promolex.md