

# Second Round of New Local Elections in Bălți Municipality – Worst Turnout Ever



*The Promo-LEX Observation Mission hereby presents the key findings of the second round of new local elections in Bălți, held on 19 December 2021. Four mobile teams consisting of two observers each, which monitored all the 60 polling stations (PSs), reported on the opening of polling stations, voting throughout the day and closing of polling stations.*

In the second-round local elections, the candidate who gains the greatest number of votes shall be considered elected (Article 145(3) of the Electoral Code), regardless of the number of voters who took part in the election. Note, however, that only 9.98% of voters (10218) cast their votes, which

seems to be the worst voter turnout in the entire electoral history of Moldova.

According to Promo-LEX observers, the monitored polling stations opened and closed as required by the rules. The vote counting was overall quick and uneventful. However, in one of the eight monitored PSs (PS 045), one observer – who, according to the PEB Chairperson, was a representative of the Centre for Legal Investigation and Human Rights Defence – engaged in the counting process, which demanded police attention to calm people down. In addition, as reported by the Promo-LEX observer, COVID-19 infection prevention measures were not observed in PS 045 during the voting and vote counting. Another case (PS 051) concerned PEB members not filling in the documentation in the right order i.e. they failed to first fill in the special vote counting form, and only afterwards – the statement of votes, having done it the other way around.

The parallel vote tabulation performed by the Promo-LEX OM confirmed the preliminary results announced by the Central Electoral Commission (CEC). Of the total 60 statements of votes collected, 8 were picked up directly from the monitored electoral bureaus (PEBs), the remaining 52 having been taken from the district electoral councils (DECs) as they were being submitted by the PEB Chairpersons. There was a large number of ballot papers declared invalid – 1786 (i.e. 17.53%).

No	Settlement	Candidates	Preliminary results from CEC	Preliminary results from Promo-LEX
1.	Bălți Mun.	Grigorișin Nicolai (independent candidate)	7148 (84.77%)	7148 (84.77%)
2.		Chirilciuc Nicolae ('Patrioții Moldovei' Party)	1284 (15.23%)	1284 (15.23%)

As a conclusion, we reiterate the need to clarify the Electoral Code provisions on the organisation of the second round of elections. We remind, as background information, that the second round of local elections held on 19 December

2021 in Bălți Municipality, was initially scheduled for 5 December 2021, but was suspended by the Central Electoral Commission. Such a decision was made as an electoral contender was deregistered because of violating the provisions of the law on campaign financing.

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