

Preliminary findings of Promo-LEX Observation Mission on the organisation of the election campaign and conduct of election day on 19 May 2024



Promo-LEX observers monitored the conduct of new local elections and by-elections – the first of their kind after the 2023 general local elections – in nine localities across the country.

In five localities, the elections were held due to the small number of candidates or even the lack of candidates in last autumn's elections, and in four – because the mayors elected in November 2023 were subsequently elected as rayon presidents.

In two of the nine localities – the villages of Chioselia Rusă and Cotovscoe (ATU Gagauzia) – people voted for both mayors and local councillors; in the v. Sagaidac (r. Cimislia), c. Tîrnova (r. Donduşeni), c. Hănăsenii Noi (r. Leova) and town of Bucovăţ (r. Străşeni) – votes were cast only for mayors, and in c. Cealîc, s. Cairaclia and c. Salcia (r. Taraclia) – only for local councillors.

The following information was collected and reported by three long-term observers (LTOs) and seven short-term observers (STOs), who monitored each of the 13 constituted polling stations (PSs).

Overall, ***the elections were organised and conducted*** transparently and efficiently by the CEC. The permanent chairpersons of the level II electoral councils (CEC II) were also actively involved. However, the lack of a permanent electoral body, in the case of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATUG), hindered the work of the lower electoral bodies in ATUG. In addition, at least at the initial stage of the training and work of electoral officials in ATUG and Taraclia, there were difficulties due to their insufficient knowledge of Romanian.

The data on the number of voters was transparent and access was given to the electoral rolls. Candidate registration was carried out according to the rules.

The election campaign was not very active, with most of the actions taking place in the last week before election day. The main way of campaigning has been door-to-door. In some localities Promo-LEX observers identified rumours of voter bribery, but the information could not be verified. There was little interest in the campaign from local and regional media. Observers encountered no obstacles in monitoring the elections.

Election Day. Opening procedures were observed in six PSs.

Polling stations opened without delay. At the same time, only in one polling station the opening solemnity was ensured by singing the anthem and displaying the state flag. Cameras did not record the entire opening process in two polling stations (22/27; 33/21), and in one station (13/26) there was no safe for keeping ballot papers not distributed to polling station staff.

Basically, voting on election day was efficiently organised and ran smoothly. However, Promo-LEX observers reported 24 incidents, most of which related to unjustified group voting (6 cases – 11/39 Sagaidac), violation of the secrecy of voting (4 cases – 33/26 Salcia, 11/39 Sagaidac), interruption of the filming process (3 cases – 33/26 Salcia, 22/27 Hănăsăanii Noi, 33/21 Samurza) and unjustified presence of unauthorised persons (3 cases – 22/27 Hănăsăanii Noi, 11/39 Sagaidac).

The polling stations were closed according to the rules. The counting of votes by the electoral bodies was carried out swiftly. At the same time, four polling station offices (11/39 Sagaidac, 13/25 Tirnova, 33/22 Cealic, 36/57 Cotovskoe) ignored the rule whereby only one member had to present the ballot paper for counting. One polling station (13/25 Tîrnova) was insufficiently lit and in another (33/22 Cealîc) the video camera was not placed next to the vote counting table.

The observation mission also carried out **a parallel vote count**. According to Promo-LEX preliminary findings, all polls are valid and in four localities mayors were elected in the first round (see the table). In two other localities (Bucovăț and Tîrnova) the second round of elections will be held in two weeks' time.

N.	Locality	Elected Mayor	CEC preliminary results	Promo-LEX preliminary results	Difference
1.	Hănăsăanii Noi, Leova	Lungu Iurie, PAS	229 (60.42%)	229 (60.42%)	–

2.	Chioselia Rusă, ATUG	Gospodinov Gheorghî, independent	240	240	–
3.	Cotovscoe, ATUG	Palic Gheorghî, independent	262	262	–
4.	Sagaidac, Cimişlia	Cojocaru Ion, PAS	412 (61.40%)	412 (60.42%)	–

Parallel counting of votes obtained by candidates for local councillor positions also confirms the preliminary results presented by CEC.

The minutes, according to the Mission, were completed by EBPS without errors.

Promo-LEX Association is an NGO having the largest experience in election monitoring at national level. Since 2009, this is the 27th Mission organised with the involvement of more than 17 thousand national observers. The purpose of the Observation Missions is to inform the public about the organisation and conduct of the elections and to increase confidence in the electoral process. The Observation Mission is taking place with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development ([USAID](#)).

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