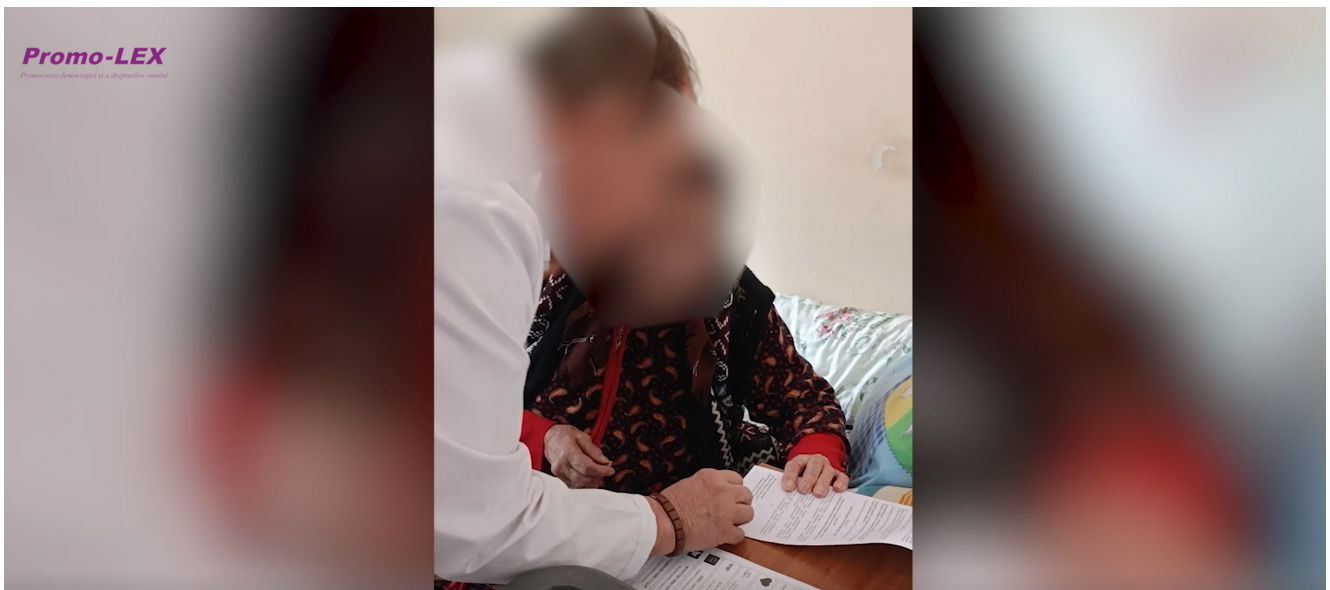


Promo-LEX calls for government agencies to step in a case of vote secrecy violation for at least 25 voters



Promo-LEX Association calls on government agencies to take a position in a case observed on Election Day when at least 25 people could not be guaranteed the right to secret and free vote. The Observation Mission reported this alarming incident on October 20, in a [press release made at 22:00](#).

Members of the precinct electoral bureau No 36/5 in Comrat, Gagauzia took a mobile ballot box to the local retirement home. During the voting procedure, they failed to ensure the secrecy of the vote for at least 25 voters. Moreover, in some cases the “VOTED” stamp was applied by the person “assisting” the voters, without the voter showing their exact choice.

The case was reported to the Central Election Commission and the General Police Inspectorate for them to examine the

situation at the said polling station. We state the inacceptability of inaction by members of the precinct electoral bureau who did not step in to stop the vote secrecy violation, as well as that of exercising another person's right to vote.

Given that the failure to ensure the secret and free vote for persons with special needs seems to be a systemic problem, we consider it necessary both to regulate the assisted voting procedure in detail and train electoral officials on the subject of assisted voting, as well as take other actions to prevent such incidents in the future.

Let it be reminded that Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities sets out a number of guarantees for people with disabilities in the voting process, including:

- ensuring appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use voting procedures, facilities and materials;
- protecting the right of persons with disabilities to vote by secret ballot in public elections and referendums, without intimidation, facilitating the use of new and assistive technologies where appropriate;
- guaranteeing the free expression of will for persons with disabilities as voters and, to that end, allowing a person of their choice to assist in voting at their request, as the case may be.

Promo-LEX also reported the case to the General Inspectorate of Police for its examination in terms of the criminal act provided for by Article 182 para. (1) of the Criminal Code (a person's voting instead of another person), but also of other criminal and/or contravention provisions that could be relevant in the case reported.

We specify that, in order to ensure a fair and transparent election process, it is extremely important that the vote be

direct, secret and free. The vote must be cast without coercion or influence, so that the voter has the opportunity to choose their representative without any pressure or indication from others. Last but not least, the electoral authorities that manage the voting process need to be independent and impartial and ensure the necessary conditions for secret and free voting.

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