

Promo-LEX finds an increased number of derogatory materials and more intense black PR, involvement of religious cults in the election campaign and subtle masking of donors



The Promo-LEX Observati on Mission for the Presidential Elections finds in its Report No 5 an increased number of

derogatory materials about the candidates and more intense black PR, involvement of religious cults in the election campaign and subtle masking of donors. The report covers the monitoring period between 28 October and 10 November 2016.

During the electoral period between the two rounds of election, Promo-LEX EOM found the **involvement of the clergy of the Metropolitan Church of Chisinau and the Entire Moldova in**

the electoral campaign, by expressing publicly the political preferences in the favor of the election candidate Igor Dodon. Promo-LEX regards this as a violation of Article 31(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, which establishes the *secular nature of the State and separation of religious cults from the State*, as well as of Article 15(2) of the Law on Freedom of Consciousness, Thought and Religion, which obliges *the religious cults and their component parts to refrain from expressing or manifesting publicly their political preferences or favoring a political party or social-political organisation.*

Promo-LEX Observation Mission draws attention on some legal provisions, which leave room for interpretation, with regards to the calculation of the percentage value of the votes expressed in support of election candidates. Thus, during the first round of the presidential elections, CEC calculated the percentage results of the candidates on the basis of the total number of votes expressed, whereas Article 109(1) and Article 110(1) of the Election Code stipulate that they should be calculated on the basis of the votes of voters who participated in the elections, including the invalidated ballot papers. **In the opinion of Promo-LEX, CEC calculated incorrectly the percentage value of votes, which should be smaller for all candidates.**

Thus, according to the information available on the official website of CEC, candidate Igor Dodon accumulated 47.98% of votes. If the percentage value were calculated on the basis of the total number of expressed voted, and not on the basis of validated votes, then Igor Dodon would have obtained 47.24%. There is a difference of 0.74%, which is significant. The second candidate, who accumulated a significant number of votes, is Maia Sandu – 38.71%. Respectively, if the total number of accumulated voted were reported to the total number of expressed votes, Maia Sandu would have obtained 38.12% of votes, which is by 0.59% less than the percentage announced

officially by CEC.

The observers informed that the staff of Orhei Mayor's Office and its subordinated enterprises and institutions were forced, by Indication No 490 of Mayor Ilan Sor, to submit their ID card and its loose leaf, military card and diploma/qualification certificate in order to update the personal files of the staff. In connection with the public recommendation to boycott the presidential elections, made previously by candidate Inna Popenco, **Promo-LEX regards this request as a method to intimidate the staff.**

Promo-LEX identified 3 cases of electoral officials' involvement in electioneering activities in favor of candidates as follows: Igor Dodon – 1 case, Maia Sandu – 2 cases. Though the number of such incidents is not high, their very existence is alarming. At the same time, according to the information provided by Promo-LEX observers, during the monitoring period, there were registered two cases of offering electoral presents in favor of candidate Igor Dodon.

In addition, **Promo-LEX EOM found, with concern, the active use of *printed material with derogatory content against the candidates* during the election campaign for the second round of the elections.** Promo-LEX observers identified 4 types of derogatory materials against Maia Sandu and one derogatory material against Igor Dodon.

On the basis of the submitted financial statements, made public by CEC, **Promo-LEX EOM found that two election candidates (Dumitru Ciubasenco and Maia Sandu) have recorded donations from the party that appointed them, without revealing the origin of the primary donors, who made the transfer on the party's account.** Promo-LEX EOM reiterates during this election campaign, as well, that this practice is a subtle method intended to conceal the donors and avoid financial transparency.

Promo-LEX EOM finds that 94% of the total expenses incurred by the election candidates in the first election round are for advertising. Other expenses relate to: use of transportation vehicles – 2%, expenses for delegation or secondment of people (volunteers/observers) – 2%, organizing meetings and events – 1%, additional maintenance costs – 0.3%, communications – 0.3%, consultation expenses – 0.2%, and other expenses – 0.1%.

Promo-LEX Observation Mission consists of 42 long-term observers who will monitor the electoral process in all constituencies of the Republic of Moldova during 31 August – 30 November 2016. On the election day, Promo-LEX will delegate a short-term observer in each polling station of the country. Promo-LEX EOM will also perform the Parallel Vote Tabulation in all polling stations. The Mission will monitor the electoral process in about 47 PS open abroad. The observers involved in the monitoring process sign the Code of Conduct of the Promo-LEX Independent National Observer, assuming the commitment to act efficiently, in good faith and in a non-partisan manner. The activity of all observers is coordinated by a central team consisting of 37 persons.

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