

# ДОКЛАД № 2 | МИССИЯ ПО НАБЛЮДЕНИЮ: ПРЕЗИДЕНТСКИЕ ВЫБОРЫ И КОНСТИТУЦИОННЫЙ РЕСПУБЛИКАНСКИЙ РЕФЕРЕНДУМ 20 ОКТАБРЯ 2024 Г.



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# Promo-LEX released the second report of the Observation Mission for the election on 20 October

The Promo-LEX Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections and the Republican Constitutional Referendum released today its second monitoring report covering the period 20 August – 17 September.

The report mainly reflects the process of nominating and registering electoral competitors, the legal framework relevant to this process, the performance of electoral competitors, as well as the work of electoral bodies in preparation for the presidential elections and the referendum on October 20.

**Legal framework.** The Observation Mission (OM) report highlighted an important aspect related to the participation of the incumbent President in the 20 October election. The Constitutional Court had previously emphasized that the President must be apolitical, and the nomination of Maia Sandu by PAS raised questions about her neutrality. Given the impossibility of suspending the incumbent President from office for the period of the electoral campaign, Promo-LEX OM recommends that the President should refrain from participating in official public events that could be perceived as electoral campaigning activities and should minimize the use of administrative resources during the electoral campaign.

Promo-LEX OM also raised concerns over the refusal of the

Central Electoral Commission (CEC) to register some initiative groups, citing reasons such as political affiliation of candidates. Although CEC claims that political independence is a prerequisite for running as an independent candidate, the legislation does not expressly regulate such a ground for refusing registration of initiative groups. Promo-LEX recommends clarifying these issues in order to ensure transparency and predictability of the electoral process.

**Electoral bodies.** The electoral councils were set up within the deadline provided for by the legislation. For the majority of councils (95%), 11 members were appointed. The gender equality is uneven, with the majority of members being women (71%). According to the findings, only 17 out of 37 councils are accessible to people from vulnerable groups. Moreover, three councils (EDEC no. 36 ATUG, no. 37 – for localities on the left bank of the Dniester and no. 38 – for polling stations constituted abroad) did not have adequate premises for carrying out their activities one week after their establishment.

In total, 2,221 polling stations were set up for the autumn election, including 30 polling stations for voters from the left bank of the Dniester and 234 polling stations for voters from abroad set up by CEC in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code. Promo-LEX OM observers found that most polling stations (81%) were located in houses of culture and educational institutions, including pre-schools.

**The organisation of polling stations abroad** was carried out according to a legal framework established by the Electoral Code and CEC regulations. The main criterion for establishing polling stations is voter turnout in the last three elections, with other complementary criteria such as pre-registration and information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A novelty in the electoral legislation for diaspora voting is the introduction of postal voting, with 1,994 citizens registered for this type of voting. CEC approved three polling

stations for postal voting.

Promo-LEX has noted some differences between its estimates for the distribution of polling stations abroad and those established by CEC, in particular for Italy and the UK.

As regards **the organisation of polling stations for the left bank of the Dniester**, even if the number of polling stations has been reduced from 41 (2021) to 30, we believe that access to voting will generally not be affected. One issue remains the freedom to vote, as previous observation experience has shown that one of the main challenges is to counter and sanction organized transportation of voters, as well as possible cases of corruption.

**Electoral disputes.** During the observation period, Promo-LEX noted that at least eight complaints were submitted to the CEC, most of which were declared inadmissible. A number of complaints concerned allegations of use of administrative resources, electoral campaigning and others. Promo-LEX warns that it is necessary that the resolution of complaints should be carried out within the deadline stipulated by the Electoral Code (3 days, with the possibility of extension by 2 days) and that the complainants should be informed about the remedies available.

During the monitored period, four complaints were filed in court against CEC decisions. Three of them were rejected and in one case the court obliged CEC to issue a reasoned decision.

**Nomination and registration of electoral competitors.** Between 21-31 August 2024, the Central Electoral Commission received 23 applications for the registration of initiative groups (IGs) in support of 19 presidential candidates, of which 13 were accepted. Three applications were rejected and two did not receive the required number of votes.

Out of the 13 IGs to which subscription lists were issued, 9

candidates submitted their subscription lists and registration files to the CEC, out of which 4 were registered as electoral competitors. CEC received 14 applications for registration as participants in the Constitutional Referendum, registering 10 participants, out of which 8 chose YES and 2 NO.

**Performance of electoral competitors.** Promo-LEX observed that 12 out of 13 registered IGs carried out 475 activities to collect signatures in support of presidential candidates, with the highest activity in the case of Ion Chicu (PDCM), Renato Usatii (NP (OP)) and Maia Sandu (PAS) – who cumulatively carried out 71% of the total observed activities. No signature collection activities were observed for IG Victoria Furtună (IC).

The activities took place predominantly in Chisinau, but also in other cities (Balti, Donduşeni, Ialoveni, Causeni), and the collection period ranged from 3 to 24 days. Promo-LEX observers found that in the case of at least three candidates, signatures were collected by unauthorized persons.

In the context of the constitutional referendum, the electoral campaign seems to have started ahead of schedule, in violation of the legal provisions, with multiple promotional activities with electoral overtones, including sponsored postings and distribution of information materials. Moreover, violations were identified, such as the lack of complete information on advertising materials.

**Misuse of administrative resources.** Promo-LEX identified 13 cases of misuse of administrative resources by various political groups and local authorities. Among them, PAS was targeted in 8 cases related to signature collection and EU promotion, BE Împreună (EB Together) and BP Victorie (PB Victory) were involved in using educational resources and organising events serving political purposes, as well as presenting donations as being made by the party. PDCM and LPA were also cited for misuse of administrative resources in the

process of collecting signatures and promoting political speeches, respectively.

**Activities with voter corruption potential.** During the monitored period, activities with voter corruption potential involving PB Victory and PVM (Party for Moldova's Future) were observed. PB Victory distributed school bags and school supplies to students from socially vulnerable families and provided wheelchairs to some individuals, with reported cases of promises of money against signatures. The PVM was also involved in collecting signatures through unauthorized persons who were allegedly paid for these services.

**Election and electoral campaign financing.** Most of the IGs have appointed treasurers and reported the opening of the „Electoral Fund” accounts, with the exception of IGs Alexandru Arseni (IC) and Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM). Some IGs encountered difficulties in opening accounts thus affecting their activity. In terms of financial reporting, most of the IGs submitted information on financing, albeit with some errors, meeting deadlines. However, irregularities were found in the reporting of expenses. 12 out of 13 registered IGs reported revenues totalling 2,009,727 MDL, of which 292,076 MDL – from material donations (15% of total declared revenues).

For the signature collection activities carried out by 11 IGs, Promo-LEX estimated unreported expenses of at least 580,321 MDL. The highest unreported expenses were in the case of IG Irina Vlah (IC) – 43%, followed by IG Maia Sandu (PAS) – 23%. The most frequent unreported expenses were for promotional materials (52%).

**Hate speech.** Between 20 August and 8 September 2024, at least 40 cases of hate speech and other expressions of intolerance were identified. Most cases were spread via social media (19 cases) and mobile apps (10 cases). Most often, hate speech was based on political affiliation (12 cases), sexual

orientation/gender identity (8 cases) and sex/gender (6 cases).

All 40 cases of hate speech had over 3 million views and more than 23 thousand shares.

As a reminder, Promo-LEX Association launched on 20 August the Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum. The observation will cover the whole electoral period, including election day and, if necessary, the second round.

Report no. 2 of the Observation Mission can be accessed [here](#).

*The Observation Mission is financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union and the German Marshall Fund of the USA, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the International Organization of Francophonie, and Soros Foundation Moldova. The Observation Mission is carried out under the aegis of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections.*

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**REPORT NO.1 | Observation  
Mission: presidential  
elections and republican  
constitutional referendum  
October 20, 2024**



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# Promo-LEX Association has launched the Observation Mission for the election of 20 October 2024

Promo-LEX Association has launched the Observation Mission for the presidential election and constitutional referendum of 20 October 2024. The observation will cover the entire election period, including election day and, if necessary, the second round of voting.

The core team of the Mission and 45 long-term observers (LTOs), together with about 740 short-term observers (STOs), will monitor the election at national level, acting as static observers in 600 polling stations, as well as in 70 mobile teams that will visit all other polling stations during the election day. In addition, all polling stations open to voters from the Transnistrian region will be covered with static

observers, and at international level observation will be carried out in over 50 polling stations. Promo-LEX will also monitor hate speech and discrimination through seven monitors.

The Promo-LEX Observation Mission will monitor the observance of democratic principles and the national legal framework in the work of electoral bodies, registration of electoral competitors and electoral campaigning, financing of the electoral campaign, and other relevant aspects. On election day, Promo-LEX observers will supervise the opening and closing of polling stations, the voting process, the accessibility of premises, and the summing up of results. Likewise, they will carry out rapid counting of votes. Four interim reports will be presented (five in the event of a second round), and one final report, as well as press releases on election day.

In the context of the launch of the Observation Mission, Promo-LEX presented its first report, which analyzes the social and political background, legal framework, preparations for the presidential election and the constitutional referendum of 20 October, as well as other issues characteristic to the pre-election period.

**Background to the election of 20 October 2024.** The presidential election and the constitutional referendum this autumn will take place in a context marked, from the point of view of domestic politics, by a comfortable parliamentary and governmental stability for the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS), but also by a complicated relationship with the opposition, both in the Parliament and outside it.

A total of 64 parties have the right to participate in these voting events, and so far, at least 17 potential competitors have shown intention to participate in the presidential race and/or in the referendum. The competitiveness of this election is underpinned by both its dual nature and the 2025 parliamentary elections, seen as a major political

opportunity.

The integrity of democratic processes in the Republic of Moldova is further challenged by the problem of illegal financing of political and electoral processes. It has long exceeded the limits of an internal political competition and has become, rather, a manifestation of the hybrid war of the Russian Federation against the Republic of Moldova. Although Ilan Shor's party was declared unconstitutional in 2023, political activity continues through the political bloc "Victorie-Pobeda" [Victory], significant funds being allocated for its promotion.

Voting this autumn will also have very strong geopolitical valences. The geopolitical insecurity generated by the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has determined the acceleration of European integration processes, Moldova having managed to open EU accession negotiations in 2023. Against this background, the question asked at the referendum and the presidential election will once again test the West-East geopolitical division in society, with potential effects not only on the Constitution, but also on the social and political life in Moldova and even in the region.

**Legal framework.** This year's election is being held under the new Election Code, in force since January 2023, which had been amended several times up to a year before the election. Some of these changes were technical in nature, while others were more significant.

The legislature removed the ban from holding presidential or parliamentary elections along with a constitutional referendum. Promo-LEX criticized this change on the grounds that it could affect the equal opportunities of competitors and the voters' freedom to form opinions.

In April 2024, the Parliament adopted the law on partial implementation of postal voting. Promo-LEX welcomed the

introduction of this alternative method of voting, but also expressed some reservations, especially regarding the decision-making process and the lack of a broad political consensus on this issue.

Related legislation has also been amended. The law on political parties was supplemented with provisions designed to clarify some procedures and legal effects of limiting the activity of political parties. In addition, the amounts of fines for violations admitted in the electoral process and the sanctions for passive electoral corruption were amended in the Contravention Code.

**Electoral bodies.** The Central Electoral Commission is the authority responsible for organizing and conducting national elections. It adopted and amended several regulatory acts relevant to the election of 20 October 2024, approved the decision on the calendar program and at least 20 other decisions on the organization and conduct of elections.

The CEC's activity is generally transparent, all meetings being public and broadcast on online platforms. The Commission also conducts various information campaigns for voters. However, the Promo-LEX OM also found some deficiencies related to the publication of information about the adopted draft regulatory acts and decision-making transparency on the institution's website.

**Nomination of candidates and actions with electoral tint.** Candidates for presidential election can be officially nominated starting 60 days before the election and up to 30 days before the vote. So, tomorrow, 21 August, the process of nominating presidential candidates officially begins. So far, several candidates have expressed their intention to participate. Promo-LEX emphasizes that this is not a violation, but the electoral promotion of potential candidates before the start of the official campaign can affect the principle of equality of competitors.

Promo-LEX noted that at least eight potential candidates carry out promotional activities, such as setting up tents, distributing fliers, placing sponsored posts in social media, or organizing events. In connection with the constitutional referendum, campaigns for and against were observed, with activities that can influence the vote.

The Promo-LEX Observation Mission found two projects with potential for electoral corruption, coordinated by Ilan Shor, which, through their impact, can affect voters' freedom to form their opinion in the election. One of them is the initiative to pay allowances of 2,000 MDL through the Russian bank Promsvyazbank to pensioners from certain regions of the country. The other project, GagauziyaLand, was opened on 18 August, with the promise that the entrance and all attractions for children and adults would be free.

**Use of administrative resources.** During the election period, the use of administrative resources by candidates is prohibited. Although the Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice on Referendums allows the state to express its opinion for or against the text put to the vote, it still has the obligation to maintain its neutrality and, in particular, not to use public money to promote its opinion.

Between 8 July 2024 and 18 August 2024, the Government of Moldova conducted the information campaign "Europe for You". The Promo-LEX Observation Mission found that this campaign was planned and promoted from public money after the announcement of the election date, being implemented also during the election period, which can be interpreted as having the purpose of attracting political capital in support of the referendum. In this context, Promo-LEX reiterates the recommendation that such practices should be banned even outside the election period.

Finally, the Promo-LEX report underlines the importance of competitive and transparent elections in Moldova. The

association aims to inform the public and authorities about observed trends and to help prevent violations of electoral legislation.

Report no. 1 of the Observation Mission can be accessed [here](#).

*The Observation Mission is financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union and the German Marshall Fund of the USA, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the International Organization of Francophonie, and Soros Foundation Moldova. The Observation Mission is carried out under the aegis of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections.*

*Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report lies with the Promo-LEX Association and does not necessarily reflect the position of the donors. In case of discrepancies between the text in Romanian and its translation into another language, the Romanian version of the report will prevail.*

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**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 Hănăsăniî Noi, 33/21 Samurza) and unjustified presence of unauthorised persons (3 cases – 22/27 Hănăsăniî 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 Tîrnova, 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 Cealic) 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.	Hănăsăniî 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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# Final Report: Observation Mission general local elections 5 (19) november 2023



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**Findings and recommendations  
of Promo-LEX Mission  
regarding the 2023 general  
local elections**



General local elections of 5 (19) November 2023 have proved that the electoral legislation, applied for the first time, still needs improvement, and that changes to the legal framework during the electoral period have a negative impact on the fairness, transparency, predictability, and integrity of the electoral process. Lessons learned from the local election were discussed during a round table organized by Promo-LEX, attended by representatives of electoral bodies, other relevant institutions, political parties, judicial bodies, and civil society organizations.

When bringing forward the main findings and recommendations of the Observation Mission (OM), Promo-LEX analysts emphasized that elections took place in a challenging political, internal, and external context, shaped by several phenomena (military aggression against Ukraine and Russia's hybrid war in Moldova; the unprecedented declaration of unconstitutionality of a political party in Moldova, political "migration" of mayors, etc.) which influenced the conduct of the election.

Overall, Promo-LEX evaluated the administration and conduct of

election by electoral bodies as positive. CEC has been able to handle its duties, even though they were more complex given the new electoral legislation. However, the institution also faced challenges such as insufficient human resources; delayed adjustment of the legal framework to the provisions of the Electoral Code; certification procedure for new electoral officials; processing and timely publication of reports on campaign financing, as well as appeals and complaints filed by electoral actors. The heavy workload assigned to lower electoral bodies, especially ECEC I, which at times seems to have exceeded their capacities, has created difficulties in managing the electoral process.

### **Changing the rules of the game mid-game**

Conducting the election during a state of emergency and through amendments to the Electoral Code made during the electoral period, including as a result of declaring a political party unconstitutional due to opaque and illegal financing, has sparked a cascade of uncertainties that demand to be addressed in the context of future elections.

Although the party declared unconstitutional was dissolved, its leaders continued to be involved in the electoral campaign through other parties resurrected on the eve of the elections or independent candidates. Approving changes to the existing legal framework, including by involving, contrary to the principle of legal certainty, the Commission for Exceptional Situations in restricting the right to be elected and in cancelling the registration of candidates, had a negative impact on the fairness of the electoral process and on the rights to elect and be elected. Such circumstances have created uncertainties for voters, electoral bodies, and electoral competitors, and transparency and predictability of the electoral process have been affected.

We recall that according to the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, the stability of electoral legislation is

one of the fundamental conditions of a democratic state based on the rule of law, and an important element of the credibility of the electoral process. Promo-LEX recommends that the Parliament refrain from approving amendments to electoral legislation during the electoral period or if there are objective circumstances warranting amendment, the law should be enforced in the next elections. We also emphasize that for an electoral process to be fair, where all electoral competitors enjoy equal opportunities, same rights to elect and be elected, the Exceptional Situations Commission must not intervene.

Promo-LEX found other legal issues that are not sufficiently regulated in the new electoral legislation and need to be solved. These refer, among others, to uncertainties regarding implementation of the restriction on the right to be elected for persons deprived of the right to hold managerial positions, the support of electoral competitors by subjects other than those who appointed them, the requirements for cancelling the registration of some electoral competitors and the image transfer from a political party that was declared unconstitutional to a political party registered in the electoral race, the control of the constitutionality of provisions in electoral matters, the late resolution of electoral disputes by removing the exception of unconstitutionality.

### **Illegal financing and misuse of administrative resources**

According to Promo-LEX, among the most serious violations in the campaign remain the misuse of administrative resources and illegal financing. Although the electoral and related legislation has been tightened, there is no significant decrease in the number of such cases compared to the last general local elections.

According to Promo-LEX Observation Mission, 185 cases of administrative resource utilization were reported,

particularly involving the engagement of individuals with public positions in campaign activities (61), organisation of electoral meetings within public institutions, with the employees of those institutions, during their working hours (56), and candidates attributing credit for public works/services carried out using public funds (41).

Promo-LEX observers have also identified at least eight cases that can be qualified as electoral gifting. In addition, security and law enforcement bodies state that there was also one case of systemic electoral corruption of both candidates and voters, which led to the cancellation of registration of candidates nominated by SP in all electoral constituencies.

### **More transparent reporting of campaign financing**

The new electoral legislation strengthened the role of CEC in the supervision and control of the financing of electoral campaigns. In addition, even though the new Electoral Code seems to facilitate the process of opening the “Electoral Fund” account, just like in the case of the previous elections, several political parties have informed about the commercial banks’ refusal to open this account.

The late approval of the relevant regulatory framework appears to have created difficulties for competitors in filling in and submitting reports. However, Promo-LEX OM has found a relatively high degree of submission of financial reports by competitors at CEC. In addition, submission of reports by independent candidates to ECEC remains incomplete, though more transparent than in the previous local elections.

Out of 36 political formations that nominated candidates, 32 political formations submitted at least one campaign finance report, and 27 submitted weekly financial reports/corresponding information, including the final report. Even though in the first stages CEC was unable to publish the reports within legal terms, the process has improved along the

way. The main financing sources, according to the reports, are income accumulated from individuals (donations) – 51% and own funds held on the accounts of political parties (34%).

As a result of the civic monitoring, Promo-LEX OM estimated unreported expenses for at least 4,743,455 lei. The most unreported expenses were estimated for PS (38%), followed by PSRM (16%) and PR (12%). Unreported expenses made up for 13% of the total reported expenses. Their share has decreased compared to the previous three national elections (the share of unreported expenses from the total reported ones for the parliamentary elections in 2021 was 32%; for the presidential elections in 2020 – 39%, and for the local elections in 2019 – 31%).

Although the campaign financing seems to have been more transparent, we still consider it to be low and requiring further attention. We recommend again adding provisions to the Electoral Code to regulate political and electoral financing by “third parties” more effectively.

### **Less hate speech than in the parliamentary and presidential elections.**

The level of hate speech usage in the 2023 local general elections (102 cases) was much lower compared to the parliamentary elections in 2021 (299 cases) and the presidential elections in 2020 (448 cases); however, it remained at the same level as in the previous local elections in 2019 (101 cases). The main sources of spreading hate speech remained social media (54 cases) and the mass media (34 cases).

Next, hate speech was mainly used by men (89 cases), aged between 35-50 years (72 cases). The criteria that most often formed the basis of hate speech were “political affiliation” (69 cases), “sex/gender” (37 cases), “health” (27 cases), “professional activity” (11 cases) and “sexual

orientation/gender identity” (11 cases). Of the total number of hate speech authors, 53% were electoral competitors and politicians. LGBTQI people continue to be the target of the most aggressive forms of hate speech. Marital status, gender roles, physical appearance, etc. formed the basis of sexist speeches directed against women in particular.

Promo-LEX notes a positive dynamic regarding the public authorities’ reaction to hate speech in the context of the 2023 general local elections. The number of registered complaints and documentation of alleged cases of hate speech is increasing compared to the last four years.

All the findings and recommendations of the Promo-LEX Observation Mission for 2023 general local elections are included in the FINAL REPORT, which can be accessed [here](#).

*The report and the communiqué have been prepared within the framework of the Observation Mission for General Local Elections of 5 (19) November 2023, carried out by Promo-LEX Association with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the “Democracy, Transparency and Accountability” Program and of the European Union under the “Enhancing the electoral legal framework and assessment of its implementation during 2023 local general elections” Project.*

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**OPINION of the Promo-LEX**

**Association on holding the  
republican referendum on the  
same day with the  
parliamentary or presidential  
elections**



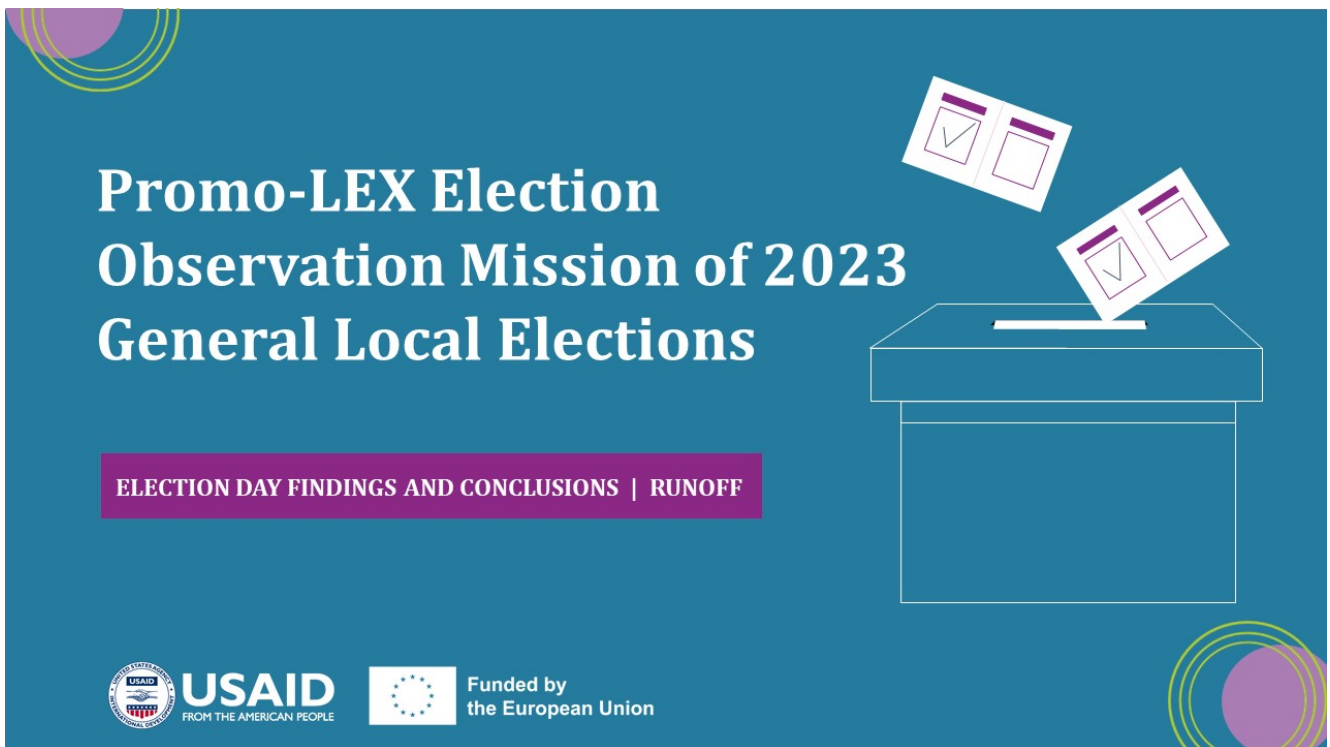
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**Coaliția Civică pentru  
Alegeri Libere și Corecte:  
scrutinul electoral din 5 și  
19 noiembrie 2023 parțial  
liber și parțial corect**

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**Promo-LEX Observation Mission**

# for the General Local Elections 2023: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS | ELECTION DAY | 2nd ROUND



On the day of the second round of voting, 19 November 2023, the Promo-LEX Observation Mission (OM) delegated one static short-term observer to 175 polling stations (PS) out of 620 open PSs. The other 445 PSs were be observed by 50 (two-observers) mobile teams. We remind that the second round of voting was held in 609 polling stations, and repeat voting in the case of 11 stations.

Following the processing of all the reports received from the observers, the Promo-LEX OM noted a number of 126 incidents during the voting.

The following were among the most frequent types of incidents: the unjustified presence of unauthorized persons in the

premises or within 100 meters of the polling station (31 cases) and photographing ballot papers and other violations of the secret of voting (25 cases).

“Those types of incidents may suggest a causal link to some negative phenomena of influencing the will of the voters, which took place also during the election campaign and could indicate attempts to control and influence the behavior and decision of the voters, including on election day”, explains the head of the Promo-LEX OM, Nicolae Panfil.

During the election day, voting was generally organized efficiently in the precincts observed. At the same time, the SAIS Elections operation was affected sporadically. 8 cases of suspension of SAIS Elections operation were found due to the lack of electricity or the Internet, or situations in which the voters were not identified by the system. Also, 12 cases of interruption of the process of shooting the electoral operations for opening the polling station or the procedures for counting the ballot papers were observed.

The Promo-LEX OM expresses its concern relating to at least 6 cases of intimidation of observers or obstruction of the free observation process in the polling station. The Promo-LEX OM noted 2 cases of refusal to release copies of all vote counting minutes. We emphasize that, in carrying out their duties, observers have the right to have access to all electoral information.

The vote counting was generally quick and calm. The preliminary results of the vote counting for the position of mayor of Balti, carried out by the Promo-LEX OM based on the minutes collected, do not indicate significant differences compared to the preliminary data announced by the Central Electoral Commission.

Opening of Polling Stations  
Earlier than 7:00 AM or with a delay



18 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Accessibility of polling stations  
for people with mobility difficulties



335 PS of 574  
are not accessible

#observatorPromo-LEX

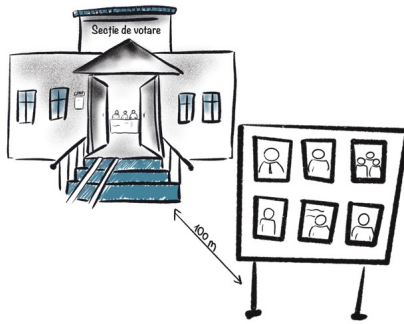
Closing of polling stations  
earlier or later than 9:00 PM



1 case

#observatorPromo-LEX

Presence of advertising materials, posters, billboards within the radius of the polling station (100 meters from the PS premises)



4 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Restricted access for observers or obstruction of the free observation process in the polling station



6 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Ballot boxes were not sealed according to legal procedures / breakage/damage or absence of seals on ballot boxes



9 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Unauthorised presence of unauthorised persons in the polling station premises or within 100 m radius



31 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Photographing of ballot papers, violations of the secrecy of voting



25 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Electoral campaigning or black PR within 100 m perimeter and/or inside the polling station to influence the voters' choice



1 case

#observatorPromo-LEX

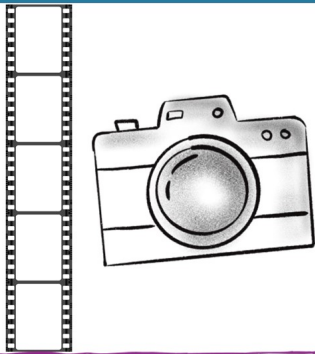
Organised transport of voters (coaches, minibuses or other transport units that normally wouldn't be in the vicinity)



7 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

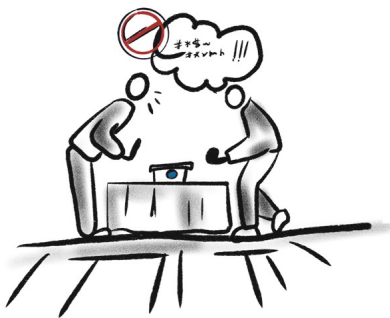
Interruption of the filming the entire electoral process



12 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

Acts of violence/intimidation of voters or other persons



2 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

**Deficiencies in the functioning of SIAS Elections system**  
(suspension of functioning; situations where SIAS Elections system indicates that the voter has voted and the voter claims he/she did not vote)



8 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

**Deficiencies in the voters lists**  
(discrepancies between addresses; deceased voters; signatures in place of other persons)



5 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

**Unjustified group voting (2 or more people in the voting booths)**



6 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

## Refusal to issue copies of all the Minutes of the requested vote count



2 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

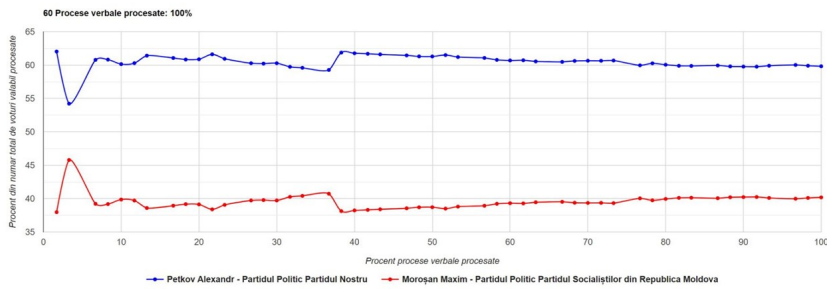
## Others





8 cases

#observatorPromo-LEX

## Evolution of candidates' scores based on the number of processed minutes, percentage - Balti municipality, Mayor



## Preliminary results on the vote count in Balti municipality

Candidate for MAYOR		CEC data	Promo-LEX data
	Petkov Alexandr, PN	59.63% (15111)	59.82% (15158)
	Moroşan Maxim, PSRM	40.37% (10230)	40.18% (10183)

## Presentation of preliminary results regarding the parallel vote tabulation in the municipality of Balti

<b>Total no. of PS</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>No. of PS observed by Promo-LEX</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>No. of Minutes received</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>No. of Minutes wrong/invalidated</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>No. of Minutes missing</b>	<b>0</b>

## Minutes that contain errors (Mayor, Balti municipality)

Types of errors	Number
<b>I = C + J</b>	4
<b>J = I - C</b>	4

*The release is drafted within the Observation Mission for the General Local Elections of 5 (19) November 2023, carried out by the Promo-LEX Association with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Program “Democracy, Transparency and Responsibility” and of the European Union through the Project “Strengthening the electoral legislative framework and*

*assessing its implementation during the general local elections in 2023".*