

Misogyny Plagues Moldova's Politics International organisations have urged Chisinau to act against discriminatory discourse

[Madalin Necsutu](#)

Chisinau

for [iwpr.net](#)

Former prime minister and pro-European politician Maia Sandu was often targeted with comments based on sexist stereotypes and prejudices. © Sean Gallup/Getty Images

In the run-up to last year's presidential election – the first time a woman had ever run for the top job – Moldovan politics witnessed an outpouring of misogynistic hate speech, writes iwpr.net.

Former prime minister and pro-European politician Maia Sandu was competing against the pro-Russian incumbent, Igor Dodon. He and his allies made frequent statements throughout the campaign focusing on the fact that Sandu was not married and had no children.

In one August speech, for instance, Dodon urged Moldovans not to vote for Sandu because “she is not interested in what is happening in the country.

“Because she has no children here, she has nothing,” he said.

Similarly insulting comments based on sexist stereotypes and

prejudices proliferated on television, in electoral campaign meetings and on social media. They mainly targeted Sandu but were also directed at other female figures including Shor Party candidate Violeta Ivanov.

Irina Corobcenco, an anti-hate speech campaigner at Promo-LEX, one of the country's leading human rights NGOs, said that this kind of discourse had become a standard part of the Moldovan political scene.

"Since 2018, we have monitored the manifestation of hate speech and incitement to discrimination in the public space and Moldovan media, including in the context of electoral campaigns," Corobcenco said.

"In recent years, electoral candidates and politicians use mostly the same rhetoric based on stereotypes and prejudices that affect social groups like women, people with disabilities, the LGBT community, etc," she said.

"The hate speech promoted by Igor Dodon was taken over by the [lower] level factors of the Socialist Party and their media," added political expert Mihai Isac. "A lot of fake news about Maia Sandu and her relatives was circulated, a trend that continues today."

He noted that this also went beyond personal, misogynistic attacks against Sandu. Religious figures also weighed in to the attacks against her, playing on her public defence of the rights of the LGBT community as part of her general pro-Western and democratic outlook.

"Based on Maia Sandu's speeches in favour of the protection of this community's rights in Moldova and [given] the Metropolitan Church of Moldova subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate, it launched a series of attacks during the election campaign," he said.

Corobcenco said that hate speech around elections appeared to

be a growing trend.

In 2018, out of 369 cases of hate speech logged, 133 cases were in a political context, and most of them took place during the campaigns for Chisinau's May local elections.

Last year, nearly 450 cases of hate speech and incitement to discrimination were recorded in the three months preceding the November 1 presidential election.

According to the Promo-LEX report, in 2018 there were an average of two new cases of hate speech recorded during each day of electoral campaigning. During the seven months of campaigning ahead of parliamentary and local elections in 2019, Promo-LEX recorded an average of over four cases per day.

Around a third of the cases recorded in 2020 were generated by journalists and media institutions, both traditional and online.

International organisations have urged Moldova to act against the phenomenon. In 2020, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (CoE) Dunja Mijatovic drew attention to the importance of preventing [hate speech](#) in the presidential election campaign in Moldova.

The Promo-LEX report noted that she "was concerned about the hate incidents, especially those from politicians, which intensified during election campaigns and targeting especially women, the LGBTI community and other social groups".

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) also recommended that Chisinau adopt a law on hate speech and protecting women.

"The ministry of labour, health and social protection has announced its intention to develop a bill to prevent and sanction sexist discourse, and Promo-LEX has been open to

contribute to its development,” Corobcenco said.

The Council of Europe is currently developing a guide for monitoring hate speech in which both Promo-LEX and Moldova’s audiovisual council have been invited to participate.

However, efforts to introduce such legislation have been ongoing since 2015, when a bill to regulate crimes motivated by prejudice passed its first reading, but did not advance to a second. This means that hate speech for the most part, remains unpunished, despite a large number of cases identified in the public sphere and in the media.

Isac stressed that a major problem was that, despite public statements by the authorities defending women’s rights, Moldova had not instituted an effective policy towards that end.

“Political misogyny is not only typical in Moldova, but rather typical of former Soviet communist states and Eastern Europe. An example of this is Romania itself, an EU member state, which has a smaller number of women ministers than Iran,” he said.

In the absence of political enthusiasm for driving change, Corobcenco said that education was key to raise awareness of just why this kind of discourse was unacceptable. Promo-LEX monitoring data showed that intolerant language was most often used by people aged 35-50.

She concluded, “Certainly any investment in youth education will ensure a generation that chooses to focus its energy and efforts on identifying smart solutions to improve the quality of life and respect for the rights of all, and not on false issues generated and fuelled by politicians.”

“Unfortunately, heightened misogyny exists in Moldova,” Isac agreed. “A generational education effort is needed.”

Pandemic Fires Hate Speech in Moldova

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The COVID-19 outbreak has worsened divisive and irresponsible public discourse in Moldova, an expert monitoring hate speech from Promo-LEX organisation tells BIRN in an interview.

Hate speech and irresponsible language by politicians, clerics and journalists has worsened in Moldova as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, aggravating xenophobia and internal divisions, the human rights organisation Promo-LEX – which has been monitoring the phenomenon for years – says.

The trends are also worrying, its expert in charge of the monitoring process, Irina Corobcenco, told BIRN in an interview. “This type of speech is a problem, and the competent authorities must take measures to prevent and tackle it,” she said.

She adds that people need to become “aware of the seriousness of hate speech, which is dangerous because it causes coalitions of one group against another person or another group, and is built on prejudices, stereotypes, conflicts or tensions that it exploits or amplifies.

“Hate speech is the stage that is followed by hate crimes and genocide,” she warns.

Irresponsible public language was evident from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, she notes, recalling how on March 7

Prime Minister Ion Chicu blamed the first infection case in Moldova on a 48-year-old woman who had flown home from Milan.

“In this case, we have proof of total irresponsibility; that person endangered the health of several people, including the Italian airport, the aircraft and our [citizens],” Chicu said at the time. The next day, President Igor Dodon revealed the name, sex, age and other details of the woman, breaking privacy law in order to focus popular outrage on her.

But after recovering, the same woman on April 9 told Jurnal TV station that the allegations were untrue, and that she never contracted COVID-19. “Nothing said on TV was true, especially Mr Dodon and Mr Chicu,” she said.

She said she lost her job and home after the Italian woman she worked for dropped her services after she got sick and went to the hospital. The doctors in Italy had diagnosed pneumonia and told her to rest, after which, using her last savings, she bought a plane ticket back to Moldova.

Dynamic accelerated started before the pandemic:

Corobcenco said hate speech has been on the rise in the country before the COVID pandemic hit the country in 2020. “The number of cases in 2019 was 2.2 times higher than in 2018, and they were registered mainly in a political and religious context,” she recalled.



The human rights activist Irina Corobcenco speaking during a training session. Photo: Personal archive

In 2018, over six months of monitoring, from February to August, 368 cases of hate speech and incitement to discrimination were identified. In 2019, over seven months of monitoring, from January to April and from August to November, Promo-LEX identified 835 cases of hate speech.

In 2018 and 2019, the monitoring process was conducted by five to seven observers contracted by Promo-LEX. Since 2020, it has been done by six people, four of whom are volunteers who graduated from a program called PromoTE.

Monitoring is based on a methodology that involves looking at media sources online, on TV, on social networks and on cyber platforms for storing and distributing information.

Observers pay close attention to public events, statements of public figures, politicians and religious figures.

Since the second half of 2019, Promo-LEX has also monitored sessions of the Moldovan parliament.

“Basically, if there were an average of two cases of hate speech per day in 2018, the number reached an average of 4.2 cases per day in 2019. In 2020, the monitoring process is still running, and data have not yet been analyzed,” she added.

Those most affected by hate speech during the pandemic are often members of the Moldovan diaspora living in the West, she continued.

“After declaring the state of emergency [on March 17] there were several cases of hate speech in relation to the diaspora, to people infected/affected by COVID-19, politicians, their supporters and to the Roma community,” she said.

About one million Moldovans live abroad, split almost equally between Europe and North America, and the Russian Federation, out of 2.7 million in total. Their political views are also split, between loyalties to West and East.

As the pro-Russian Socialist Party has little support among the Western diaspora, the media affiliated with them and their deputies in parliament have often used hate speech against them in the context of the elections, and now in the context of the pandemic, Corobcenco asserted.

Press briefings organised by the authorities routinely separate “foreign” cases of COVID-19 infection from “internal” ones, stigmatizing the former. One example of this was provided by the [reply](#) of Socialist deputy Bogdan Tirdea to another deputy on April 8 on TV 8 channel, when Tirdea accused former speaker Andrian Candu of planning “to bring Moldovans sick with COVID to Moldova”.

On April 1, the Moldovan Ombudsman, Mihail Cotorobai, expressed concern about the aggressive messages being sent to and about the Moldovan diaspora in the context of the pandemic.

“Politicians are affected also by hate speech in the context of the pandemic ... the hate speech generated by politicians refers to other politicians, usually their opponents. And hate speech against politicians is also generated from outside the country,” Corobcenco told BIRN.

She added that the pages of social networks abound in images that picture Moldovan politicians associated with COVID-19 and beyond.

During the period April 6-10, after monitoring 22 online sources and their Facebook pages, Promo-LEX found that in the case of 17 online sources, 183 news items about COVID-19 had generated 445 comments of hatred and incitement to hatred or discrimination.

Better legal framework is needed:

Corobcenco told BIRN that Moldova does not have a proper legal framework to stop or punish hate speech.

“We need a relevant legal framework for the prevention and sanctioning of hate speech ... Draft law no 301/2016 on crimes motivated by prejudice must be adopted in the second reading by parliament,” she said.



*Moldovan deputies in the Parliament waiting to vote laws.
Photo: EPA/Doru Dumitru*

However, deputies have so far shown little interest in adopting a new law regulating hate speech in the country.

The expert also calls for a national strategy, which would bring together the authorities, civil society and the media in order to create and implement long-term actions to prevent hate speech.

A big role in reducing this phenomenon should be carried out by media, she said.

“This pandemic has brought to attention the ease with which hate speech is used by both public actors and citizens, without taking into account the fact that it directly or indirectly affects all citizens in the country,” she concluded.

Representatives of EIN member Promo-LEX visit Strasbourg to raise awareness of important cases

On 5 and 6 March, a delegation of one of EIN's newest members, the Moldovan organisation [Promo-LEX](#), paid a visit to EIN in Strasbourg, where they held a number of meetings with Council of Europe interlocutors. The delegation was headed by Promo-LEX's Executive Director, Ion Manole, and its Director of the Human Rights Program, Alexandru Postica, who were accompanied by Maria Roibu, Director of Alexandru cel Bun Lyceum, a school in the Transdniestrian region.



Promo-LEX, which was established as an association in 2002, is a non-governmental organisation that aims to advance democracy

in the Republic of Moldova, including in the Transdniestrian region, by promoting and defending human rights, monitoring the democratic processes, and strengthening civil society.

The purpose of Promo-LEX's working visit to Strasbourg was to raise awareness, ahead of this week's [1340th DH meeting](#) of the Ministers' Deputies, of several important judgments of the European Court of Human Rights which are still awaiting full implementation: the [Catan and others v Russia case](#), on access to education in

Transdniestria, the [Mozer v Russia case](#) on inhuman conditions of detention in Transdniestria and the [PROMO LEX and Others v the Republic of Moldova](#) case on freedom of assembly.

The EIN Secretariat facilitated a series of meetings for the Promo-LEX delegation with lawyers from the Council of Europe's Department for Execution of Judgments (DEJ) dealing with their cases. Ms Roibu and Messrs Manole and Postica also had the opportunity to exchange views with staff from the Human Rights Commissioner's Office, the secretariat of the Committee for Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly, and the EU representation to the Council of Europe.

On the second day of their visit, Promo-LEX briefed representatives of 18 delegations from Council of Europe member States about the continued failure of the Russian government to implement the judgment in the *Catan* case against the Russian Federation. 6.5 years after the ruling was handed down, the victims have still not received compensation, and no general reforms have been adopted. As a result, hundreds of schoolchildren in Transdniestria are still denied proper education in Latin-script schools. Ion Manole explains the situation in the video below. You can find further details [here](#). Promo-LEX's latest Rule 9.2 submission on the *Catan* case is available [here](#).

Source: www.einnetwork.org

Persons represented by Promo-LEX contributed to modifying legal mechanism for issuing identity documents to people living on left bank of the Nistru

The process of issuing identity documents to the population when a part of the territory is outside the control of the constitutional authorities is difficult and complex. The documents issued by the Transnistrian administration are not recognized as they come from bodies that do not work on a constitutional basis that reflects a juridical tradition compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. As a result, most of the inhabitants of the districts from the left side of the Nistru and Bender municipality meet with problems in obtaining identification papers. In a commentary for IPN, the lawyer of Promo-LEX Association Pavel Cazacu said that even so the issuing of identity documents to the inhabitants of the Transnistrian region remains an obligation of the constitutional authorities and is necessary, including in the process of fully integrating these persons into society. Moreover, the issuing of official papers to these persons can help stop human trafficking as the persons without identification papers are vulnerable in this regard.

Identity determined after over two years of walks to doors of Moldovan bureaucracy

Currently, a person born in the districts from the left bank of the Nistru and in Bender municipality can be issued with an identification paper at the request of one of the parents who have an identity card issued by a recognized authority. There are categories of persons who face major obstacles in the process of obtaining identification papers, for example the orphans and children whose parents do not have ID papers. The cases of two young men from the Transnistrian region who sought legal assistance from the lawyers of Promo-LEX are conclusive in this regard.

Sergey Bondarev from Bender is the first person who was represented by the lawyer of Promo-LEX. At the age of 21, this didn't have a birth certificate. Even if he had documents issued by the Transnistrian administration, the lack of documents issued by the constitutional authorities was an evident limitation of the possibilities related to the observance of his rights and his chances of individual development and to aspects of his private life. After over two years of efforts and walks to the doors of Moldovan bureaucracy and a series of hearings, on December 15, 2015, the Bender Court accepted the application of the Promo-LEX lawyers and established the identity of citizen Bondarev Sergey.

The case of Alexandru Rjavitin is beyond the identification problem. Being drafted into the army by force, this escaped from the paramilitary bodies of the Transnistrian region in August 2015, crossed the Nistru and walked three days up to Chisinau in military uniform and flip-flops. Alexandru "deserted" from the "Transnistrian army" as he could no longer endure the use of violence and ill-treatment to which he was continuously subject. As he didn't have identity documents, he had to work unofficially. On July 11, 2018, after almost three years of the "desertion", the Chisinau Appeals Court accepted the applications to issue an identity document to Alexandru submitted by the lawyers of Promo-LEX.

Legal mechanism for issuing identity documents to persons from Transnistrian region

The cases of these young men are representative for a larger number people who live in the Transnistrian region, said lawyer Pavel Cazacu. The institution of legal instruments that would facilitate the process of suing official documents to these categories of people became inevitable meanwhile. As a result of repeated advocacy activities carried out, including by Promo-LEX, the constitutional authorities started to institute a legal mechanism to facilitate the process of issuing identification documents to these persons.

On December 22, 2017, the article on civil status documents concerning the certification of civil status acts registered by the de facto administration of the districts from the left side of the Nistru and Bender municipality was amended and supplemented. The goal was to confirm the civil status acts (birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, death, etc.) that happened and were registered in the localities from the left side of the Nistru and in Bender municipality by civil status documents issued by the competent constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova, if their registration was made in conditions similar to those regulated by the legislation of the Republic of Moldova. The implementation of this mechanism continues. On July 13, 2018, it was placed for consultation on the website of the Ministry of Justice, together with the informative note.

The necessity of this mechanism is indubitable, especially because according to the European Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice, the principle of nullity of the acts of the unconstitutional bodies does not refer to such matters as the registration of births, deaths and marriages whose effects, if they are ignored, will be to the detriment of the inhabitants of this territory. Despite the importance of this mechanism for facilitating the process of issuing identity papers, the constitutional authorities are to

be very prudent and to lay down very clear and rigorous rules for this procedure.

Measures that should be taken to prevent persons with dubious interests from obtaining Moldovan nationality

Under the new changes, the persons older than 18 born on Moldova's territory, who are not registered by the competent authorities as citizens of the Republic of Moldova and who cannot prove that they have the nationality of the Republic of Moldova are recognized as Moldovan citizens (...)"'. Thus, according to lawyer Pavel Cazacu, if there are defects or gaps in the procedure for confirming the civil status acts, there is a real risk that particular persons with dubious interests can obtain the nationality of the Republic of Moldova. It is thus fundamental for the constitutional authorities to have the capacity to check if a birth certificate from the left side of the Nistru is not issued fraudulently because the risk of committing frauds and acts of corruption on an uncontrolled territory is bigger. In the absence of strict control of these procedures, situations will be witnessed when, through a mechanism that has noble goals, some of the persons will obtain a birth certificate from the constitutional authorities. Later, the same persons could obtain Moldovan nationality by the simplified recognition procedure.

The civil status certificate and the identity document are the most important documents by which a person can prove their identity in the relations between citizens and with any other private individuals and legal entities. As a result of the advocacy activities performed, including by Promo-LEX Association, the Government of the Republic of Moldova started the procedure for constituting the mechanism for issuing identification papers to the population from the left side of the Nistru and Bender municipality as the infringement of this right can seriously violate the private life. At the same time, the constitutional authorities should do their best to define this mechanism in detail as the defective regulation

can have serious consequences for security.

Source: ipn.md

Transnistrians should equally enjoy ECHR guarantees

A society without free nongovernmental organizations, without independent media and human rights defenders is a weak society that is controlled through multiple abuses and crimes, executive director of “Promo-LEX” Association Ion Manole said in an international conference centering on the implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in cases concerning the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Ion Manole noted he trusts the ability of the international community to solve difficult problems without renouncing the democratic values obtained with such a difficulty, IPN reports.

According to the director of Promo-LEX, which organized the event in cooperation with the national authorities and the Council of Europe, the Transnistrian region is not the private property of the group of persons who control it. Respectively, the free access to the region should be guaranteed immediately and unconditionally. The people who live in such areas should equally enjoy the guarantees of the European Convention on Human Rights because the human rights cannot be negotiated and must be respected. Instead, the political negotiations, including the addressing of human rights, should continue so as to offer minimum observance guarantees.

Minister of Justice Alexandru Tanase spoke about the most important ECHR judgments concerning the Transnistrian region.

As a lawyer in 2004 in the case of Ilascu and others versus the Republic of Moldova and as the ex-president of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, Tanase said the judgment on Moldova's neutrality passed by the CC in May 2017 was based on this ECHR judgment. These judgments taken together are inestimable instruments that can be used to make Russia withdraw the occupation forces from Moldova's territory. Moldova will never accept a Transnistrian conflict settlement model that would not be based on the Constitution's provisions. The people of Moldova will reject any model that will envision the so-called "Transnistriization" of the Republic of Moldova.

According to the Director *General of Human Rights and Rule of Law* of the *Council of Europe* Christos Giakoumopoulos, peace and justice in Europe are obtained by constant efforts aimed at promoting common values among the member states, such as respect for democracy, preeminence of the law and human rights. The European Convention on Human Rights was adopted to ensure a collective guarantee for the minimal respect for these values. The Transnistrian issue is not fully exceptional and is not outside the guarantees stipulated by the Constitution. The ECHR found Russia internationally responsible for many of the human rights violations in the region.

In her speech, Corina Calugaru, Moldova's Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe, said the functionality of the human rights protection mechanisms depends on the involvement of the Council of Europe member states. But the role of the ECHR should not be underestimated as this offers important lessons for improving the human rights by its judgments.

Director of the Human Rights Programs of Promo-LEX Association Alexandru Postica underlined the necessity of ensuring continuity so as to defend the rights of the Moldovan citizens on the left side of the Nistru. "There are no excuses for

doing less. On the contrary, effort should be further made not only at theoretical level, but also at the practical one. The continuity is key for ensuring the preeminence of the law in the Transnistrian region, which is a general responsibility," stated Alexandru Postica.

Eight cases on the Transnistrian region were won by lawyers of Promo-LEX at the ECHR, out of the 48 won at the High Court. Promo-LEX represents 101 cases at the ECHR, 64 of out of which concern human rights violations in the Transnistrian region (35 cases refer to Moldova in general). "The persons whose rights were affected in the Transnistrian region or by the regime existing in the region cannot defend their rights and freedoms because no one monitors the human rights situation in the region and there are no efficient human rights protection mechanisms. Consequently, none of those who violate the human rights is held accountable," said Promo-LEX lawyer Nicoleta Hriplivyi.

In conclusion, the participants in the conference said the implementation of the ECHR judgments concerning the Transnistrian region implies also the problem of double jurisdiction, which cannot be overlooked. The lack of independent civil society with access to the region is another impediment to monitoring the situation in Transnistria. Consequently, the Moldovan constitutional authorities should take all the measures for the initiative groups to have access to the region so that information about the situation in the region is furnished to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and international organizations.

The conference was organized by Promo-LEX in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the Bureau for Reintegration Policies with financial support from the National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Foundations of Budapest.

Woman abused by husband goes to ECHR, case communicated to Government

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) informed the Government about the case of Yakimovschi versus the Republic of Moldova in which a woman complains that she was regularly subject to violence by her husband, in one case was even throttled and hit until she lost consciousness, but the man got only a small fine. The woman's requests to hold her husband accountable were all in vain, IPN reports.

According to jurists of "Promo-LEX" Association, which represents the woman in court, in July 2011 the plaintiff had to leave her home together with her minor children. In several months, when she wanted to take her winter clothes from her home, she went to the local police officer, but this told her to go alone. The woman was again attacked and beaten violently by her husband.

The aggressor wasn't held accountable. Not even the woman's application to issue a restraining order for her and her children to be protected was accepted. Instead, the authorities started a criminal case against the woman, who faced up to five years in jail on charges of causing of medium bodily injuries to her husband. The jurists of "Promo-LEX" said the accusation was based on a doubtful medical-legal certificate and the victim of domestic violence was acquitted after almost five years of trials.

The woman complained to the ECHR about the violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as she

was subject to bad treatment by her husband, while the Moldovan authorities didn't fulfill the obligation of conducting an effective investigation following her complaints about the use of physical and emotional abuse against her and didn't punish the aggressor.

The woman also considers that Articles 8 and 14 of the Convention were violated by the adoption by the authorities of a preconceived attitude to domestic violence against women and acceptance of such situations and by non-ensuring of protection equal to the one enjoyed by her husband.

Source: ipn.md

Protesters demand to respect right to education in Transnistria at Russia's Embassy

Students and teachers of the Theoretical Lyceum "Stefan cel Mare si Sfânt" of Grigoriopol, which is now based in Dorotcaia, together with representatives of Promo-LEX Association, on October 19 mounted a protest in front of the Embassy of Russia in Chisinau. They demanded to ensure the right to education in the Transnistrian region and to implement the ECHR judgment passed five years ago by which Russia was found guilty of violating the right to education of 170 plaintiffs, IPN reports.

"Promo-LEX" director Ion Manole said that today it is exactly five years of the day the ECHR pronounced its judgment, but this hasn't been yet implemented by Russia. "The rights of

these people continue to be violated. The number of students at these education institutions decreases. As the European Court ascertained itself, this is not due to demographical factors only, but also to the pressure to which the students, parents and teachers of these institutions are subject. We just want the Court's decision to be respected and implemented so that these students study according to their rights and convictions," stated Ion Manole.

Director of the Theoretical Lyceum "Stefan cel Mare si Sfant" of Grigoriopol Eleonora Cherkavski said that their right to education has been violated for ten years. Though the ECHR did justice to them five years ago, the struggle continues because nothing has changed. "We came to tell the Russian Federation that the wound is bleeding. It's time to take measures. The Lyceum "Stefan cel Mare si Sfant" of Grigoriopol considers it has the most painful history. In 2002 we were driven away from Grigoriopol and for 15 years have had to daily travel to Dorotcaia together with the children so that they study in Romanian there. We consider this is abnormal," she stated.

The Lyceum's vice director Svetlana Jitariuc said they bear enormous responsibility for the children who daily travel by car to classes, in the second shift, now that the daytime decreases. The students return home from school when it is dark. "We demand equity, first of all, as we defended our right ourselves, but with enormous sacrifice, by assuming responsibility for the fate of these children," she stated.

Security expert Rosian Vasiloï expressed his solidarity with the students and teachers of Moldovan-administered, Romanian-language schools based in Transnistria. According to him, the situation of these children and teachers worsens, but the Moldovan authorities, especially the presidential administration that plays Russia's game, keep silent. He called on the students from Chisinau to make common cause with their mates from the Transnistrian region.

The protesters later marched to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and to the Presidential Building to demand that the authorities should take steps for the ECHR judgment of October 19, 2012 to be implemented and the right to education on the left side of the Nistru to be respected.

source: ipn.md

NGOs demand to improve electoral legislation, not yet to replace electoral system

Civil society organizations that made a public call on February 2 reiterated their demand to Parliament to create a working group for amending the Election Code and related legislation so as to exclude the legislative shortcomings signaled by national and international election observation missions that worked in Moldova in 2014-2016. The NGOs also argue against the replacement of the electoral system.

In a [news conference at IPN](#), Pavel Postica, programs director at “Promo-LEX” Association, said the electoral legislation concerning the work of electoral bodies, party and election campaign funding, performance of the mass media in election campaigns, use of administrative resources, voter corruption and involvement of religious organizations in the election campaign should be amended.

“On February 2, we called on Parliament to draw up a clear

working program and to remove the mentioned deficiencies,” stated Pavel Postica.

The civil society organizations demand that the working group should include representatives of parliamentary parties, extra-parliamentary parties, representatives of the signatory organizations and electoral experts. The signatories are ready to take part in the meetings of the working group if this does not deal with the replacement of the electoral system. Otherwise, they will boycott the activity of the working group and will publicly state their position.

On February 2, 2017, 18 nongovernmental organizations demanded that Parliament should set up a working group to amend the Election Code and related legislation. The signatories requested the legislature to constitute a working group to draft bills to amend the Election Code and related legislation in February-March, to publicly discuss the bills in April-May and to have these appraised by international organizations, namely the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR, in May-July and to adopt the amendments in September-October.

Among the signatories are: the Association “Promo-LEX”, East Europe Foundation, the Institute for European Politics and Reforms, the Journalistic Investigations Center, the Legal Resources Center of Moldova, the Association for Participatory Democracy, Transparency International – Moldova, the Women’s Association for the Environment Protection and Sustainable Development, the Association of Independent Press, the Institute for Public Policy, and the Foundation for Development of the Republic of Moldova, and CReD0.

On March 6, the president of the Democratic Party Vlad Plahotniuc presented an initiative aimed at replacing the party-list proportional representation system with the uninominal voting system.

Source: ipn.md

Pavel Postica: Basic deficiencies should be first removed

Voter corruption, manipulation through the mass media and hate speech can occur in any type of elections –parliamentary, local or presidential – and these should be removed. This is the goal pursued by the NGOs that signed a public call to amend the Election Code, said Pavel Postica, programs director at “Promo-LEX” Association. As regards the Democratic Party’s initiative to replace the electoral system by introducing uninominal voting, this refers to the parliamentary elections only. But what should be done first is to remove the basic deficiencies, Postica stated in a [news conference](#) at IPN.

According to him, the electoral system can be modified only as a result of clear studies and analyses, where to present arguments for and against. The electoral system should not be modified before removing the current electoral shortcomings or in parallel with their elimination.

“The goal is to obtain the removal of the deficiencies existing in the electoral legislation. When these are removed, we can speak about the amendment of the electoral system,” stated Pavel Postica. Or else, a bigger problem is generated. Any amendment of the electoral code envisions the modification of the rules of the game, which should be understood both by politicians and voters.

Nadine Gogu, executive director of the Independent Journalism Center, said the NGO she represents is interested in amending the Election Code’s provisions concerning the covering of

elections by the mass media. The Center in 2012 and 2013 formulated amendments to the Election Code, but these weren't registered as a legislative initiative. If the working group that is proposed to be set up for amending the electoral legislation is functional, this should center on the conduct of the mass media in elections.

A number of 18 civil society organizations, including "Promo-LEX", East Europe Foundation, the Independent Journalism Center, the Association for Participatory Democracy and the Institute for Public Policy, on February 2 made a public call whereby they requested Parliament to constitute a working group for improving the electoral legislation.

Source: ipn.md

Confessions of former Transnistrian detainee

Moldovan citizen Vitalie Eriomenko had been held in a jail in Transnistria for six years. In a [news conference](#) at IPN, this told about the challenges with which he had to deal.

Before being arrested and convicted to 12 years in jail, Vitalie Eriomenko was the manager of a bakery complex based in Slobozia, which employed about 500 people. The troubles started in 2010. A so-called deputy of the Transition region decided to take his business. As he refused to concede it, he was illegally arrested. Vitalie Eriomenko said he was swiftly convicted of embezzlement, with all his rights being violated. His house was searched, while his wife and children were driven off the house in the middle of the night.

After he was jailed, the relatives could not visit Vitalie Eriomenco for several years. No medical assistance was provided to him even if he was sick and needed medicines. Only owing to the effort made by the rehabilitation center "Memoria" could he obtain the necessary medical assistance. The ex-detainee also appreciated the efforts of the jurists of "Promo-LEX" Association, who now represent him at the ECHR. Eriomenko said he was set free only after he made a number of approaches to the Transnistrian leader Yevgheny Shevchuk.

"Promo-LEX" head Ion Manole said the man decided to appear before the press after he met one of his torturers in Transnistria at a mall in Chisinau. In the absence of a mechanism for monitoring the observance of human rights, the real number of victims of torture and inhuman treatment in the Transnistrian jails is not known. Many of the victims of the illegalities committed by the so-called Transnistrian investigation bodies and courts do not know how to defend themselves and ultimately give up, abandoning businesses and property.

"Promo-LEX" jurist Nicoleta Hriplivii said the case of Eriomenko was examined as a matter of urgency by the ECHR and this will soon pass its judgment. The ECHR earlier pronounced a decision by which Russia is convicted in the case of Boris Mozer, who complained about inhuman treatment in the Transnistrian jails.

Source: ipn.md