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THE CIVIC COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

PROMO-LEX ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE nr.1

**Monitoring of the general local elections
of June 5th 2011**

Monitoring Period: 06:30 – 11:00 on Election Day (June 5th 2011)

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Opening of the voting stations

The majority of voting sections were opened at the time established by law, that is, 07:00. Small delays, of up to fifteen minutes, were noted in at least 9 voting stations.

Logistical preparation of the voting stations

Promo-LEX observers have reported cases in which, at the time when the voting stations were opened, the members of the Polling station Electoral Bureau (PEB) were not in possession of the basic electoral rolls.

In the village of Cobîlnea, in the rayon of Şoldăneşti, for example, 2 members did not have the electoral rolls because they had not been taken in their entirety from the printer. The lists were only brought at 07:30. 8 voters had waited for the lists in order to vote. In the village of Porumbrei, Cimişlia rayon, the voting station begun its activity at 07:10. This was because the safe in which the ballot papers were being kept was located in the Town Hall, 50m away from the voting station. The ballot papers were brought in a sealed bag. In the same locality, one of the members of the PEB took the basic electoral rolls home with them for safe-keeping, where they subsequently forgot them.

The electoral candidates lodged a complaint with Rayon-Based District Electoral Council nr.24 in connection with the fact that the electoral constituency secretary, Axenia Placinta, had taken the electoral registers and electoral rolls to her house.

Voter secrecy

In at least five electoral constituencies, observers reported cases in which the curtains had been removed from the voting booths by PEB members. The latter had cited the oral recommendations of the Central Electoral Commission.

At voting station nr.3 in the town of Rezina, for example, PEB members insisted that the curtains of the voting booth remain open. If voters closed the curtains, so as to ensure secrecy, PEB members opened them again.

In the majority of voting stations in the constituencies of Taraclia and the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, the voting booths did not have curtains.

At voting station nr.293 in the sector of Buiucani, Chisinau, one voter found a ballot paper that had not been stamped in one of the voting booths. As a result, PEB members decided to remove the curtains from 2 of the 3 voting booths.

At voting station nr.10 in the rayon of Ungheni, at 07:15, a case was reported of two people entering a voting booth simultaneously. The electoral commission intervened and prohibited simultaneous voting in the same voting booth.

Shortage of voting ballots

Promo-LEX observers reported numerous cases in which there was a shortage of ballot papers, a result of the fact that voters had been entered onto the electoral rolls at the last minute. Such a situation was reported in at least 10 voting stations in 9 electoral constituencies. A particularly serious case of this nature was noted in the village of Stăuceni, Chişinău, where 50 voters had been registered at one and the same address on *Frunză str.*

Similar shortages were reported in the rayon of Ialoveni (in the villages of Mereştii Mici, Roşu and Văşieni); in the town of Basarabasca (voting station nr. 4); and in the municipality of

Chisinau (in voting stations nr.264 in Vadul lui Vodă, nr.273 in Bubuieci, nr.284 in Cruzești, nr.257 and nr.258 in Durlești, nr.266 in Vatra, nr.300 in Ghidighici, and nr. 248 and nr.249 in Codru). Observers operating at constituency level pointed to similar irregularities in the rayons of Cahul, Călărași and Leova.

Incompatibility of PEB members with other held functions

Observers found at least one case in which an electoral candidate for the constituency is also a legal representative of an electoral candidate in the voting station in Drochia.

Continued Campaigning

At the start of the elections, Promo-LEX observers reported many cases of continued political campaigning. Observers reported many cases in which electoral candidates and their supporters were continuing to urge voters to vote for them, and at least 2 cases in which electoral campaigning was taking place within the voting stations themselves, and was being done by members of the PEB.

Cases of political campaigning in the vicinity of voting stations was reported in the city of Bălți (voting station nrs. 3 and 31: the banners of one candidate were being displayed 40m from the entrance of the voting station); in the rayon of Șoldănești (at the voting station in the village of Cibilnea: by Ana Cuceinic, a candidate for the office of mayor); in the rayon of Orhei (at the voting station in the village of Braniște: by Crijanovschi, a representative of an electoral candidate; and at the voting station in the village of Chiperceni: by Russu, a mayoral candidate); in the rayon of Dubăsari (at the voting station in the village of Cocieri: by Iurie Coțofan, a candidate for the office of local councillor; and at the voting station in the village of Doroțcaia: by Andrei Leasco, a candidate for the office of mayor); in the rayon of Criuleni (at the voting station in the village of Dubăsarii Vechi: by the daughter of Margareta Padurean, a candidate for the office of councillor, who was driving voters to the voting station in the candidate's own car); in the rayon of Sîngerei (at the voting station in the village of Țiplitești: by Prisacaru Adrian, a candidate for the office of mayor); and in the rayon of Anenii Noi (at the voting station in the village of Telița: by Viorica Ipatie, a candidate for the office of mayor).

More seriously, at voting station nr. 83 in the sector of Buiucani in the capital, Anastasia Botnarenco, a representative of an electoral candidate, entered a voting booth while voters were inside. The observer at this voting station reported how Botnarenco asked the voter in the booth if they had voted for who they should, and if they knew where to put their stamp.

At one point during the morning at voting station nr.6 in the town of Comrat, the secretary of the PEB stationed herself by the entrance of the voting booth and urged voters to vote for a particular candidate. After observers noted what she was doing, she went away from the voting booth.

Alcoholic drinks being sold near voting stations

Alcoholic drinks were being sold near at least 4 voting stations. 20 meters from voting station nr.2/31 in the city of Bălți, in the immediate vicinity of voting station nr.62 in the village of Văleni (Cahul rayon), and in the vicinity of voting station nr.12/3 in the town of Criuleni, alcoholic drinks were being sold. In the village of Miciurin, in the rayon of Drochia, a large

number of villagers were sat at a bar next to the voting station, consuming alcoholic drinks whilst holding their ballot papers.

Errors on the ballot papers

Error were found on the ballot papers at at least 2 voting stations.

In the village of Oclanda, Soroca rayon, an error had been made on the ballot papers for choosing the local councillor, the name of the PLDM party appearing as 'PL'.

At voting station nr.33/3, the ballot paper for choosing the mayor of Taraclia listed only 7 of the 8 candidates officially registered.

Violations of voting procedure

At voting station 15/4 in the village of Coșnița, voters who had a residence visa for a different locality were voting on the basis of a domicile visa.

Violations of the rights of observers and representatives

In several cases, observers were prevented by PEB members from moving freely through the voting stations. At at least 2 voting stations, PEB members prohibited the use of mobile phones and cameras to film the voting proceedings.

At one voting station in constituency nr.16 in the rayon of Edineț, representatives of the PLDM party (who wished to broadcast their footage on-line) were prohibited from filming the whole period of the election, being encouraged to film only short segments

At the voting station in the village of Budăi, in the rayon of Telenești, a cord was put up beyond which observers were forbidden to go.

At voting station nr. 14 in the village of Sadaclia, Basarabeasca rayon, 7 appeals were made by electoral candidates because the PEB president had forbidden observers to come within the voting station. Observers had also been prohibited from using their phones. The Promo-LEX observer explained to the PEB president the rights of the observers and the problem was overcome.

Destruction of ballot papers

A ballot paper was torn in two outside a voting station by one voter who was inebriated. The incident took place around 10:35 at voting station nr.1/264 in Vadul lui Vodă, municipality of Chisinau. The voter explained his action by saying that he had forgotten to put the ballot paper in the ballot box.

Stealing of ballot papers

One voter took a ballot paper at voting station nr.1/264 in the town of Vadul lui Voda, municipality of Chisinau. The voter in question received 4 ballot papers, but was holding 5 in his hand. PEB members called the police, who took the voter to the police station.