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THE CIVIC COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

PROMO-LEX ASSOCIATION

PRESS RELEASE nr.2

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

Monitoring Period: 11:00 – 17:00 on Election Day (June 5th 2011)

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Suspension of the voting process

The majority of voting stations have functioned normally, without any interruptions to the voting process, even though observers have noted some instances in which appeals have been made. Nevertheless, a suspension of around 10 minutes to the voting process was observed at voting station nr.236 in the municipality of Chisinau, where, owing to the fact that the ballot box had not been properly sealed at 07:00, it was necessary to unseal the box completely, to count the slips, and to re-seal the box again.

Voter secrecy

According to the recommendations of the Venice Commission, states are encouraged not to make changes to the electoral law and to electoral procedures for at least one year before the election. Contrary to these recommendations, some members of the Central Electoral Commission made recommendations to the electoral bodies to modify the traditional voting process. It was suggested to the electoral bodies, for example, to remove the curtains from the voting booths. This modification to the traditional procedures proved unacceptable to many voters, since they had no way of knowing about the change. In addition to the voting stations mentioned in the first press release, similar instances of curtains being removed from the voting booths were recorded at voting station nr. 117 in Chisinau and at voting station nr.3 in Ungheni.

Isolated cases in which voters entered the voting booths without proper authorisation were noted at voting station nr.12/19 in Dubăsarii Vechi in the Criuleni rayon; at voting station 24/6 in Otaci in the Ocnîța rayon; and at a voting station in the town of Cantemir.

Incompatible functions and offices

Observers continue to report new cases in which certain officials hold other offices or functions that conflict with their responsibilities as actors in the electoral process.

At voting station nr.21/41 in Ialoveni, Țipala, Andrei Poiată is registered both as a councillor and as an observer for one of the party-political candidates.

A similar yet somewhat more serious situation was noted in Purcari, in the Stefan Voda rayon, where one person, despite an appeal having been made in connection with their holding incompatible functions, and despite having had their accreditation withdrawn, refused to leave the voting station.

Continued electoral campaigning

As voting began, Promo-LEX observers noted many cases of continued political campaigning. Observers have continued to report new cases of political campaigning. At one point, at least 10 cases of political campaigning were noted in at least 4 electoral constituencies (Ungheni, Glodeni, Leova, Soroca).

For example, at the voting station in Rublenița, in the Soroca rayon, Ion Costachi, a candidate for the office of local councillor, was campaigning at the entrance to the voting station. When this was noted by the president of PEB, he left, but returned shortly afterwards accompanied by other party supporters.

The selling of alcoholic drinks in the vicinity of voting stations

Over the course of the day, Promo-LEX observers reported at least ten cases in which alcoholic drinks were being sold in the vicinity of voting stations. Such a case was noted for example at voting station nr.26/24 in Meșeni in the Rezina rayon, and at voting stations nr.25/15 and nr.25/13 in the town of Orhei.

More seriously, in the village of Cunicea in the rayon of Florești, some members of the voting station were observed consuming alcoholic drinks behind the premises of the voting station.

Errors on the ballot papers

Promo-LEX observers found errors on the ballot papers in another two voting stations.

In elections for the office of city councillor in Ungheni, for example, it was found that the name of the independent candidate Valeriu Ciobanu incorrectly appeared alongside a party logo. An appeal was made on this point.

At voting station nr.24 in Colibabovca, in the rayon of Leova, it was noted that on the voting ballots there appeared two candidates with the same name and surname (Șavriev Gheorghii). The candidates were in fact from 2 different political parties, and were only distinguishable through their patronymics.

Electoral bodies' members' knowledge of the electoral procedures

Over the course of the day, Promo-LEX observers noted cases in which members of the electoral bodies proved themselves to have been inadequately trained. This led to certain deviations from the norms of the electoral process, and cases in which different PEB members dealt in different ways with the same situation.

In the voting station in the village of Țambula in the Sîngerei rayon, a voter signed for the receipt of his ballot papers, after which he refused to use two of them and left them on the desk of PEB member. The latter gave them to the president, who decided that they should be invalidated, but did not know the correct procedure.

Similar situations were registered at voting station nr.31/9. in the village of Cobîlnea in the rayon of Șoldănești, but PEB members put the ballot papers back on the desk without making a mention in the electoral rolls. At voting station 24/6 Otaci in the Ocnița rayon, a group of three voters went together into a voting booth, saying that they could not read. When PEB members tried to stop them, the three people got angry and threw their ballot papers back onto the desk. The PEB president personally put the ballot papers into the ballot box (the voters not having indicated their choice of candidate on the ballot papers).

Ballot papers stamped on the reverse side

In at least 2 voting station in the constituencies of Cahul and Chisinau there were cases in which the voting station stamp was applied on the reverse side of the ballot paper.

Refusals to grant ballot papers and limitations of the right to vote

At voting station nr. 27 in the village of Gornoe, Strășeni rayon, a case was noted in which a voter, who had filled in his ballot paper incorrectly, was refused a new ballot paper. The voter was forced to put his original ballot paper into the ballot box.

At the voting station in the village of Țarigrad, in the Drochia rayon, certain requests to vote at home – which had been submitted on Saturday at 13:00 – were denied on the grounds that the requests were submitted by representatives of an electoral candidate. No proof of the voters' inability to come to the voting station were attached to these requests. A case was noted in Floresti in which voters were denied the medical certificates necessary to allow them to vote at home.

Invalidation of ballot papers

At voting station nr.2 in Strășeni, 2 cases were recorded in which ballot papers were invalidated on the grounds that voters had photographed their ballot papers (showing their choice of candidate). The proper legal bodies were not informed of these events.

Ballot papers taken outside the voting station premises

Promo-LEX observers noted at least two attempts to take ballot papers outside the voting station. These cases were noted at voting stations nr.25/12 and nr.25/2 in Orhei. The attempts were stopped by PEB members.

The use of administrative resources

Promo-LEX observers noted one isolated case in which administrative resources were used on election day. The president of the rayon of Dubăsari, relieved from office for the campaign period, used the service car of the rayonal council on the day of the election (registration RM A 300).

Transportation organised to take voters to the voting stations

Promo-LEX observers reported multiple cases in which transport was organised to take voters to the voting stations. Such a situation was particularly visible in Comrat; in the village of Feștelița in the Stefan Voda rayon; and in the village of Fîrlădeni in the Căușeni rayon.

Shortage of ballot papers

Promo-LEX observers found a new case in which there was a shortage of ballot papers, a result of the fact that voters had been registered at the last minute. This new case was reported at the voting station in Hîncești, Boghicieni.