



Liga Apărării Drepturilor Omului din Moldova
League for Defence of Human Rights of Moldova

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coalitia civică
pentru alegeri libere și corecte

CIVIC COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

LEAGUE FOR DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF MOLDOVA

REPORT V

REGARDING THE MONITORING OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS 2009 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Monitoring period: March 18 – April 2, 2009



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Chisinau



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The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the donors.

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring period: March 18 – April 2, 2009

The present report comprises the results of a thorough monitoring of the pre-election situation in Moldova in the period of March 18 – April 2, 2009 by the League for Defense of Human Rights of Moldova (LADOM). This report is the fifth in the series and is part of the effort to monitor the pre-election situation from December 2008 to the election day of April 5, undertaken within the project "Observation of the 2009 parliamentary elections" of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections - Coalition 2009.

The Coalition 2009 was launched on November 18, 2008 at the initiative of seven non-governmental organizations – the Association for Participatory Democracy (ADEPT), CONTACT Center, the League for Defence of Human Rights (LADOM), the Association of Legal Clinics (APCJM), the National Youth Council (CNTM), the Independent Journalism Center (CIJ) and the Association of Independent Press (API) – that joined their efforts to continue the activities started by the Coalition 2005 and Coalition 2007 to promote free and fair elections. 63 other non-governmental organizations joined the Initiative Group since. The Coalition remains further open to new members.

Domestic election observation is crucial for ensuring the integrity of the election process and the citizens' right to participate in the governing process of their country. LADOM is a non-partisan and non-governmental organization, performing domestic election observation in Moldova since 1996.

The findings presented in this report are collected through direct observation by a national network of 37 long-term monitors. The monitoring is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Election Code of Moldova, LADOM's Observers' Code of Conduct and international standards of domestic election monitoring.

The conclusions and recommendations in this report are formulated in good faith and are presented in a spirit of professional cooperation with all the stakeholders interested in building a transparent and fair election process in Moldova.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LADOM observation effort found that during the monitoring period the electoral campaign activities have generally followed the legal requirements. Nonetheless, LADOM observation effort noted several breaches of the law. The repeated occurrence of shortcomings observed by LADOM, from one monitoring period to another, casts doubt on the competitiveness of the electoral process.

The Central Elections Commission issued accreditation to domestic and international observers from several independent organizations, to monitor the April 5th 2009 Parliamentary elections: the OSCE Democratic Institutions and Human Rights office (OSCE/BIDDO), the Association for Participative Democracy (ADEPT), the Community of Independent States (CIS) observer mission, the Council for the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of CIS member states, the Bulgarian Embassy in Moldova, the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, representatives of the Eurasia foundation in Moldova, 2105 national observers from the League for Defense of Human Rights in Moldova (LADOM), as well as representatives for the electoral contestants.

During the monitoring period, the CEC has examined 24 complaints rejecting 14. The complaints have mainly addressed the media coverage of the electoral campaign, misuse of administrative resources for campaign purposes, electoral expenses and other issues.

Observers noted a series of shortcomings similar to those reported in previous monitoring periods. The perpetuation of such incidents undermines the image of electoral candidates and public authorities who, through their behavior, damage the competitiveness of the electoral process.

LADOM observed several occurrences of intimidation and harassment of electoral representatives and a lack of neutrality from members of the local public administration. LADOM noted that some electoral candidates engage in unethical and indecent behavior towards other candidates and resort to black campaigning to discredit their political opponents.

The observation effort found that public administration and law enforcement agencies continue exerting administrative pressure on and intimidating the voters. Similarly, continues the intimidation of media and observers. Some observers have been denied access to campaign activities.

Despite previous, repeated concerns of the observers, the misuse of administrative resources for electoral campaigning by some candidates still remains a common practice.

LADOM will continue monitoring the electoral campaign across the country. Following the voting, a special report on the election day will be issued. Subsequently, a final report will be released.

I. FINDINGS

1. Electoral campaign

Intimidation of representatives of electoral contestants

During the monitoring period, several representatives of electoral contestants were intimidated, harassed and sanctioned by public authorities, officials or unidentified individuals. In the Stefan Voda district, the Festelita village city hall representative, Ciobanu Liuba, harassed and insulted Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) supporters using indecent language. In the same district, in the Olanesti village, the city council secretary failed to inform PLDM representatives of the designated locations for electoral posting, despite their repeated requests and inquiries with the local mayoralty. Consequently, PLDM representatives were sanctioned administratively for posting electoral materials in inappropriate places.

Preferential treatment of certain electoral contestants

Local public authorities show preferential treatment towards certain electoral contestants. Party of Communists (PCRM) electoral representatives, in particular senior state officials, benefit from special treatment and help in organizing campaign meetings in various regions, while other contestants fight off hindrances in organizing such meetings. For instance, in organizing PCRM campaign meetings in Drochia, state authorities largely advertise campaign activities to the population; civil servants and other public employees are coerced into attending the meetings. On the other hand, when other candidates organize meetings the same public employees are forbidden to attend. On March 21st, Liberal Party (PL) representative, Dorin Chitoarca, was prevented from holding a proper campaign meeting due to the lack of chairs, stand and microphone in the meeting hall. The same hall was fully equipped with chairs, stand and microphones for the campaign meetings of the incumbents.

In Soldanesti, general public meetings are only called for candidates of the incumbent party, PCRM. In the villages of Alcedar, Mihuleni, Olişcani, Chipeşca, Alliance Moldova Noastră party (AMN) receives preferential treatment; in Cobâlnea, Răspopeni, Pohoarna – PCRM. On March 20th, in Piscăreşti, Şoldăneşti, the mayor locked down and refused to open the Culture House for a meeting with Elena Burca of the Democratic Party (PDM). In Răspopeni, a group of the PCRM mayor's supporters prevented citizens from entering the Culture House for a meeting with the PL's Dorin Chitoarca. Citizens in Vadul Raşcov were taken by buses from Chisinau to a meeting with Marian Lupu, of PCRM.

Discrediting electoral candidates

Unknown individuals undertake discrediting actions against certain electoral candidates and try to misinform the public. For instance, in Căuşeni, prior to the campaign meeting of the AMN candidate, Gh. Susarenco, three individuals with yellow scarves and supporting posters were spotted around the industrial goods market where the meeting was supposed to take place. They were giving out 50 lei to every person, in exchange for the promise to vote for AMN. These young individuals were filmed by a fourth. Their activity was deemed instigative. AMN

condemned it and notified the police and the local prosecutors.

Along the same lines, public media misinforms the electorate. On march 20th TV "Moldova -1", and "NIT" representatives disrupted a training of the elections office official in the Criuleni district council headquarters. Their pretext was looking for AMN's Tudor Tipa, the mayor of the Cosernita village, for an official statement regarding an incident in his village. The mayor informed them that he will be available for comments at 2pm that day, at the village mayoralty. He also said the appropriate authorities were to make official statements regarding the case in question. The evening news on the abovementioned channels presented slanderous material on Mr. Tipa, with emphasis on his connection to AMN. Several shots allegedly presenting information about villagers of Cosernita were in fact shots taken that day at the district council headquarters, with members of elections offices from other villages and regions.

The black campaigning activities noted above are against ethical norms and public order. They are in complete violation of article 47, paragraph 1 of the Electoral Code.

We remind all electoral candidates that slander and damage inflicted upon other candidates' reputations and their political identities are fundamentally against electoral standards, and practices accepted in honest and competitive conduct of elections.

We recommend to the CEC to investigate all reported cases of electoral denigration and take the appropriate measures.

Media coverage of electoral activities

As a result of monitoring the election period between February 13th and March 10th, the Audio-Visual Coordinating Council (ACC) publicly sanctioned the main TV channels, M1, N4, NIT, PRO TV Chișinău, TV 7 and TVC 21 for disregarding political pluralism principles in their news bulletins. Several NGO's specialized in monitoring media coverage of electoral campaigns (such as API, CIJ, APEL) have released multiple reports on identified biased editorial policies.

Pressure exercised by prosecutors

Throughout the election period, local prosecutors ask the CEC for permission to prosecute on criminal charges several electoral candidates. On March 18th, the district prosecutor in Nisporeni asked the CEC for permission to take legal action against Ion Sturza, of PLDM. Chisinau municipal prosecutors and General prosecutors asked the CEC for permission to indict Ion Chitoroaga and Nicolae Andronic, both of which were listed on electoral candidates' lists. The CEC rejected the prosecutors' requests.

Lewd behavior on the part of electoral candidates

Some electoral representatives use offensive language, denigrating their political opponents. At the opening ceremony for the Valea Periei tractor and heavy machinery center, in Cimișlia, President Vladimir Voronin used indecent words

against Serafim Urechean (MP, chairman of AMN). During the same ceremony, President Voronin also stated that the mayor of Chisinau, Dorin Chitoarca, does nothing else but deal with the castration of stray dogs in the city.

On March 22nd, a PLDM representative reportedly harassed a filming crew of the OMEGA Informational Agency. By means of force, he forbade street filming of the PLDM public electoral activities, which were promoted under the slogan “Don’t be afraid to vote.”

Prior to Dorin Chitoarca’s campaign meeting in Stefan Voda, on March 27th, People’s Christian Democratic Party (PPCD) representatives placed drawings of a dog with Mr. Chitoarca’s head on the chairs in the room. Several inebriated members of the PPCD and PCRM were present at the meeting, cursing and insulting Mr. Chirtoaca.

Once again, we recommend that the electoral contestants abide by the electoral Code of Conduct and principles of ethical electoral behavior.

Coercing students into participating in campaign activities

Involving students in meetings with electoral candidates remains a common practice. On March 24th students from several villages in Criuleni were taken to a meeting with Marian Lupu of PCRM, under the false pretext that they were going to see a concert with artist Anisoara Puica. The meeting took place at the local House of Culture, where two female students were intimidated. On March 25th, in Dubasarii vechi, Marian Lupu had an organized meeting with students from the “Nicolae Donici” high-school. The meeting was scheduled for noon, at the local House of Culture; classes were cut short to bring students to the meeting on time. Many of the students attending the meeting were under 18.

On March 24th and March 27th in the town of Floresti and the village of Cuhurestii de Sus respectively, people celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Soviet Army’s offensive on Moldovan territory, with the participation of student and teacher groups. During the manifestations and meetings, district representatives and PCRM deputies to the Parliament made electoral speeches.

Posting electoral materials in unauthorized locations

In most regions, electoral candidates post their material in unauthorized places. In the village of Topal, Cimișlia, PCRM electoral posters are all over, on city hall walls, on electrical polls, fences and so on. In the town of Cimișlia, AMN and PLDM posters are posted on polls and fences. In Drochia the panel commissioned by PD is being used by the PSD. In Vulcanesti AMN posters are being ripped off and replaced with PSD posters. In the village of A.I. Cuza, in Cahul, PD posters are being ripped off and replaced with PLDM posters, etc.

Practically, in most electoral locations almost all parties post their electoral material in unauthorized places. Furthermore, in regions where city hall officials failed to put up electoral panels, parties such PCRM, AMN, MAE, PD, PSD, PL and PLDM paid for the installment of electoral posting panels themselves.

In places such as Chișinău, Orhei, Bălți electoral posting panels for various parties (PLDM, PD, AMN, MAE) are constantly being stained with paint or otherwise deteriorated.

2. Undue influence on voters

Intimidation of voters

Local authorities intimidate voters and threaten them with job loss if they fail to comply with political demands. In the Drochia district, communist mayors warn civil servants that their participation in certain electoral meetings may result in job loss for them. In the village of Popești de Jos Ion Nicoara, vice-president of the local PCRM, threatened PL supporter Lidia Rusu with dismissal from her function if she attends the meeting with Dorin Chirtoacă.

On March 24th, attendants were raucous at a students' meeting with Marian Lupu of PCRM at the Cultural Centre of the Criuleni district. Deputy-head of police, Gorpasin Ion, aided by another police officer, forcefully escorted two female students from the Mascăuti theoretic high-school out of the building. The girls, by the name of Cenușă Maria and Iațco Irina were taken to the police station for laughing during the meeting. They were forcefully taken to a dark room and were demanded to give written statements. They later returned to the school bus, in a state of shock and shaken with tears, to the amazement of their fellow students. The next day, regional counselor Tudor Cucu (PCRM representative for the region) paid a visit to the Mascăuti high-school. The two girls were told that if they go public with the events of the previous day, they may encounter serious problems with their baccalaureate exams.

Voters complain that they are being threatened by electoral representatives in Telenești, Orhei and Chișinău. PCRM, MAE and some PLDM representatives in these areas ask for signatures, kick doors and have a rude behavior.

We remind public authorities of their obligation to remain neutral. Furthermore, we remind candidates and voters alike that according to article 70, paragraph 1 of the Electoral Code, any act to hinder the right to vote freely or to stand for election is a crime, punishable by the Criminal Code.

We urge the Central Elections Commission to closely investigate these cases and allegations.

Pressure on voters, through politically motivated visits of control agencies

Agents and organizations who support certain electoral candidates suffer regular controls from the state control agencies. On March 13th, a commission of 4 members named by the Ministry of Health by act no.19-p §1 of 5.03.2009 conducted an inspection at the regional hospital in Căușeni. The inspection was prompted by an anonymous petition to the Parliament, registered under no. SPA-A-506/09 of 18.02.2009; the petition denounced law violations and fraudulent activities of Cojocaru Alexandru, the hospital's administrator and also currently a candidate for UCM, previously a member of PCRM. PLDM members involved in

small and medium business activities complain that lately they receive more inspections from various levels of officials, followed by fines and pressure.

Law enforcement agencies ask subordinates to vote for PCRM

Senior General Prosecutors' and Ministry of Interior (MAI) officials organize work meetings with employees of territorial branches, for electoral purposes. During these meetings, the abovementioned officials ask their subordinates and state employees to vote for the incumbent party. MAI officials expressly asked Police Department employees in Orhei to vote for PCRM. General Prosecutors' high officials asked regional prosecutors in Telenesti to also vote for the incumbent party.

Electoral gifts

During the monitoring period, some electoral candidates offered gifts to voters. On March 21st, Social Democratic Party (PSD) representatives donated icons to churches in the villages of Inești and Sărăteni. Two Sundays prior to that, PPCD representatives donated icons to churches of the Basarabia Church. On March 6th, PLDM organized a rally in Chisinau. According to some interlocutors, the participants from Ciorescu village were allegedly paid 50 lei while those from Goian village – 40 lei. The party also provided transportation to the rally for participants. A similar rally was organized on March 22nd.

On March 12th Mrs. Taisia Voronin, Vladimir Voronin's wife, came to the village of Zâmbreni with gifts for the local kindergarten. At the end of the visit, she appealed to the community to vote for the communists. On March 31st, in the village of Ursoaica, Causeni district, Iurie Munteanu, deputy minister of Economy, donated a Niva car for the mayoralty and a 25-piece furniture set for a kindergarten, in the name of PCRM.

We remind electoral contestants that, according to article 38, paragraph 7 of the Electoral Code, it is illegal to offer to voters money, gifts and other free goods, including those coming from humanitarian aid or charity donations. We recommend that electoral candidates conduct their activity according to the electoral laws.

3. Pressure on civil society

Denying access to electoral activities. Intimidation of observers.

During the monitoring period, public law enforcement officers intimidated several independent observers. For instance, on March 13th, at 4pm, Mrs. Ludmila Rusnac, Briceni rayon head of Education, Youth and Sports, denied or LADOM observer Nicolae Samcov access to the secondary school in the village of Pererita, thus preventing him from conducting his regular observer activity. In the village of Corpaci from the Edineț district, mayor Valeriu Prisneac refused to cooperate with the LADOM observer, claiming an independent, healthy, personal interest in the good development of the elections, with no need for additional observers. In the village of Stăuceni LADOM reminded the authorities of the requirements for proper voter list compilation. While the LADOM observer had subsequently agreed with

the mayor on costs for hall rent for a training session for short-term observers, in line with the electoral provisions, the mayor refused to provide the space and raised the price on the eve of the training session.

We remind electoral contestants, public administration and electoral authorities that according to the Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, “observers should be given the widest possible opportunity to participate in an election observation exercise.” The same rights are granted by article 63, paragraph 5 of the Electoral Code.

4. Misuse of public resources in the electoral campaign

Misuse of administrative resources

Electoral representative make use of administrative resources to organize electoral meetings with the voters for certain candidates. In Ștefan Vodă, PPCD representatives use city hall rooms and institutions belonging to the city hall to hold electoral activities. In Anenii Noi, civil servants in the service of the district governor organize meetings for PCRM. Public events to promote official state programs are used senior state figures for political purposes. The abovementioned politicians use office transportation and security staff to attend these events.

Using office cars for electoral campaign purposes

Some politicians use their office cars for electoral purposes. During the monitoring period observers noted that Serafim Urechean (AMN) and Constantin Cojocaru (PDM) used official vehicles to travel to Ocnita and Edinet, respectively.

We recommend that public authorities prevent politicians from using state official transportation for electoral purposes.

II. VOTER LISTS

Verifying and finalizing voter lists

Although all voter lists were supposed to be displayed at polling stations no later than March 16th, several polling stations were notably late in posting them. Furthermore, the lists were not properly compiled and several polling stations had to withdraw them for additional verification. Some polling stations mistakenly reprinted lists from the 2007 elections, which were specifically conceived for run-up voting.

In some regions, the lists were put together alphabetically, regardless of the voter's geographic location at the time of the voting. According to these lists, some voters would have to travel a considerable distance, without the opportunity to vote at a polling station close to their location.

For these and other reasons, the members of the elections offices found themselves in the situation of double-checking the lists door to door. According to our observers, the double-checking of electoral lists is in progress in most regions,

such as Căușeni, Bălți, Briceni, Edineț, Fălești, Glodeni and other.

Although the final lists have not been displayed yet, some interlocutors raised concerns that there may be a rise in the number of registered voters, as opposed to what is currently on the lists. LADOM will continue to monitor this aspect.

Absentee vote certificate

During the electoral period, voters who will be traveling outside their registered address area will be allowed to vote based on an absentee vote certificate, released upon request by Polling Electoral Boards (PEB). During the monitoring period, LADOM observers reported a series of complaints from voters who find themselves unable to obtain an absentee vote certificate. LADOM informed the CEC about these complaints. There are several categories of citizens who cannot obtain a voting certificate:

- voters with a permanent residence left of Nistru but temporarily residing right of Nistru (working, studying, etc.), where they would like to vote;
- voters without a permanent residence and who have left the town of their last residence, who would like to vote at their immediate geographic location on the day of the voting;
- permanent residents abroad, but who will be in Moldova on the day of the voting.

Although there are laws regulating the procedures to obtain a voting certificate, the current electoral procedures do not provide for voters from the abovementioned categories. Hence, these voters are not guaranteed their right to vote, which might lead to an increase in the number of citizens who will be unable to cast their ballot.

We recommend that the Central Elections Commission issues uniform regulations, allowing all categories of citizens requesting an absentee vote certificate to obtain one.

Mobile voting

Individuals incapacitated by age, health or any other reasons have the right to request voting on the premises of their immediate location (mobile voting). Elections offices receive requests for mobile voting starting 2 weeks prior to E-day and no later than 3pm on E-day. In some regions with nursing homes, hospitals and hospices no polling stations have been set up around these institutions which host a rather large number of individuals. With this in mind, we fear that these voters may end up being neglected on election day. Voting on the premises should be ensured by elections offices by a mobile polling booth that would be taken to the voters. As it has happened in previous elections, the mobile booth goes out to the incapacitated voters only after 3pm on election day. At stations where the number of solicitants is very high, there is a danger that the mobile booth may not reach all the votes in time.

We recommend that the CEC and the electoral bodies identify these polling stations and offer additional personnel for their elections offices of up to 11 people. We also recommend setting up 2 mobile booth groups at a time and starting the mobile voting procedure at the beginning of the voting day.

III. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION

Forming of electoral bodies

The responsibility for election administration is vested in a system of electoral bodies, including the Central Elections Commission (CEC), the District Electoral Councils (DEC) and Polling Electoral Bureaus (PEB). The CEC is a permanent body, the DECs were formed 50 days before the E-day and PEBs were formed 20 days before the E-day.

Gender composition of electoral bodies

In all electoral bodies, up to three times more women serve as election officials than men. For instance, in Stefan Voda there are 72 men and 341 women, in Cimişlia 111 men and 274 women, in Anenii Noi 98 men and 326 women, in Basarabeasca 47 men and 123 women, in Căuşeni 128 men and 332 women and in Bălți 248 men and 425 women.

Performance of PEBs

During the monitoring period, several PEBs failed to ensure the proper functioning of the bureaus. Many of the PEB offices were not physically located at the polling stations, many PEBs were closed at times when observers checked in and there was no answer at office contact phone numbers.

On March 16th the whole process of establishing elections offices was complete and the electoral system should have functioned in its entirety. Still, there are problems with the activity of the elections offices: some members were formally included without their consent; some were from other regions, and so on. In these conditions, the proper functioning of PEBs was impossible, since it required altering their composition, which duty is up to DECs.

Furthermore, certain elections offices were formed under the influence of electoral contestants or local authorities. This could endanger the impartiality of the PEBs. For instance, on March 13th, Causeni city hall hosted a meeting of members of the seven PEBs in town. Electing the chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary for each PEB was done under the supervision of mayor A. Zaremba and with the influence of Mr. Serghei Blidari of PCRM. The chairpersons of the seven offices were all representatives of the city hall.

On March 18th there was a training for chairpersons of PEBs in Cimislia rayon. The training was led by the chairman of the Cimislia rayon Andrei Vacariuc, also chairman of the regional AMN branch. During the training, Mr. Vacariuc was wearing the party's electoral insignia.

In the villages of Bocani and Sărata Veche from the Falesti district, the mayors publicly expressed their disapproval with the elected PEB chairpersons.

We recommend to the CEC and DECs to take a closer look at the way PEBs function, to guarantee the structural and functional independence of PEBs and refuse all attempts from public authorities or electoral actors to meddle

with their activity.

Performance of DECs

The DECs deal with recruiting and training individuals for positions in the PEBs. During the monitoring period, they organize training activities to prepare electoral bodies for the election day and the set up the polling stations.

Performance of Central Elections Commission

During the monitored period, the Central Elections Commission made efforts to guarantee the right to vote for people without residence and people with expired IDs. To this end, the CEC made changes to the Instructions regarding the conditions of voting for the parliamentary elections of April 5, 2009, allowing individuals without residence to vote in the area of their last official residence, on supplementary list. Individuals with IDs that will have expired by the day of the voting would be allowed to vote based on their expired IDs.

Notably, the CEC accredit national and international observers for the parliamentary elections of April 5, 2009. These were national and international observers on behalf of: the OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the Association for Participative Democracy (ADEPT), the CIS observer mission, the Council for the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of CIS member states, the Bulgarian Embassy in Moldova, the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the representatives of the Eurasia foundation in Moldova, 2105 national observers from the League for Defense of Human Rights in Moldova (LADOM), as well as representatives for the electoral contestants.

Also, the CEC is making efforts to ensure the completion of activities from the electoral program, to train the members of all electoral bodies and to develop and print voting ballots separately for every individual polling station.

IV. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Complaints and observations

During the electoral period, electoral bodies received complaints and notifications from electoral contestants, public authorities and citizens, with regards to various violations of electoral laws. These included occurrences of vandalizing electoral materials, intimidation of electoral representatives, misuse of administrative resources for electoral purposes, hindering campaign meetings, and other.

The complaints are being evaluated according to provisions of the electoral laws. Also, law enforcement agencies have identified and sanctioned various other breaches of the electoral legislation. The police have officially recorded many of these breaches. The courts have fined hundreds for posting electoral materials in unauthorized places.

For instance, during the monitoring period complaints were registered in the following regions: Basarabeasca – 5 complaints; Bălți - 16 complaints; Rezina – 7 complaints; Drochia – 12 complaints; Călărași – 13 complaints, Ungheni 8 complaints, Chișinău – 27 complaints, etc.

During the monitoring period, the CEC has examined 24 contestations rejecting 14. Throughout the electoral period, the CEC has evaluated 58 complaints in total and rejected 33. These complaints mainly focused on media coverage of the electoral campaign, the misuse of administrative resources, electoral expenditures, etc. The complaints were filed by the following parties:

- PCRM - 10 complaints, 6 of which were rejected;
- AMN - 21 complaints, 15 of which were rejected;
- PLDM- 4 complaints, 1 of which was rejected;
- PD- 7 complaints, 2 of which were rejected;
- PL - 6 complaints, 2 of which were rejected;
- UCM - 2 complaints, none of which were rejected;
- MAE – 5 complaints, 5 of which were rejected;
- Others- 2 rejected complaints.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

We remind all electoral candidates that slander and damage inflicted upon other candidates' reputations and their political identities are fundamentally against electoral standards, and practices accepted in honest and competitive conduct of elections.

- 1. We recommend to the CEC to investigate all reported cases of electoral denigration and take the appropriate measures.**
- 2. Once again, we recommend that the electoral contestants abide by the electoral Code of Conduct and principles of ethical electoral behavior.**
- 3. We remind public authorities of their obligation to remain neutral. Furthermore, we remind candidates and voters alike that according to article 70, paragraph 1 of the Electoral Code, any act to hinder the right to vote freely or to stand for election is a crime, punishable by the Criminal Code.**
- 4. We urge the Central Elections Commission to closely investigate these cases and allegations.**
- 5. We remind electoral contestants that, according to article 38, paragraph 7 of the Electoral Code, it is illegal to offer to voters money, gifts and other free goods, including those coming from humanitarian aid or charity donations. We recommend that electoral candidates conduct their activity according to the electoral laws.**
- 6. We remind electoral contestants, public administration and electoral authorities that according to the Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, "observers should be given the widest possible opportunity to participate in an election observation exercise." The same rights are granted by article 63, paragraph 5 of the Electoral Code.**
- 7. We recommend that the Central Elections Commission issues uniform regulations, allowing all categories of citizens requesting an absentee vote certificate to obtain one.**
- 8. We recommend that the CEC and the electoral bodies identify these polling stations and offer additional personnel for their elections offices of up to 11 people. We also recommend setting up 2 mobile booth groups at a time and starting the mobile voting procedure at the beginning of the voting day.**
- 9. We recommend to the CEC and DECs to take a closer look at the way PEBs function, to guarantee the structural and functional independence of PEBs and refuse all attempts from public authorities or electoral actors to meddle with their activity.**