



coalitia 2009



coalitia civică pentru alegeri libere și corecte

CIVIC COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

PROMO-LEX ASSOCIATION

3rd Monitoring Report

For Early Parliamentary Elections of 29 July 2009

Monitoring period: 19 – 26 July 2009

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Introduction

The monitoring of the campaign for early parliamentary elections of 29 July 2009 conducted in 7 electoral districts is a project implemented by the Promo-LEX Association within the framework of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections "Coalition 2009". „Coalition 2009” is a voluntary association of nongovernmental organizations, which runs projects aimed at improving the election process and enhancing citizens’ confidence in that process. Coalition 2009 election monitoring programs are conducted both by Promo-LEX and by other organizations.

This Third Monitoring Report conducted in the period of 19 – 26 July 2009 covers the monitoring of the campaign for 29 July early elections in the electoral districts of Floresti, Rezina, Dubasari, Anenii Noi, Causeni, Stefan Voda, and the Transnistrian region of Moldova, by over 270 observers. These districts are adjacent to the Transnistrian region and host special polling stations opened for voters residing in that region. The information presented in this Report was collected by Promo-LEX observers in the monitoring districts by direct observation, meetings with interlocutors and consulting official documents.

The findings and recommendations of this Report have been developed in good faith and are presented in a spirit of professional cooperation between all parties interested in building a transparent and fair electoral process in Moldova. The authors of this Report call all interested persons or institutions to contribute information and criticism and/or rectify any aspects or recommendations included in this and other Monitoring Reports on the electoral process in the mentioned electoral districts. The monitoring effort is governed by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Electoral Code, and international election monitoring standards and principles.

This project is implemented with the financial support of the National Endowment for Democracy.

SUMMARY

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort notes that the electoral process continues with violations of the electoral legislation by the actors involved.

In the monitored regions, the legal provisions on compiling and publicizing voter lists were largely ignored or only partially respected; errors were identified in these lists, including the inclusion of persons that are passed away.

A pattern of undue influence and intimidation of voters is also noted, including by obliging citizens to participate at electoral meetings. Occurrences of intimidation of representatives of electoral contestants by the public administration have been reported.

In the majority of the cases, the distribution of the leaflet „Choose No.1” developed by the State Company „Post of Moldova,” was perceived as covert advertising in favor of one electoral contestant.

Some representatives of the local government continue to influence the voters’ opinions by using public resources, or technical means of local institutions.

Compared to the previous period, the transnistrian regional mass-media covered the campaign activities more frequently and in a more balanced manner. Some electoral contestants published advertisements without mentioning „paid from electoral funds.”

Voters from the Transnistrian region were not informed by the electoral authorities on the voting procedure (place and date of elections). Because no voter lists have been prepared for these voters, they were unable to possibly obtain absentee voter certificates.

I. VOTER LISTS

Compilation of Voters Lists

On July 21, 2009, a Promo-LEX observer noted in the voter lists of the polling station No. 17 from the village of Ion Voda, Floresti district, a mistake in the name of citizen Poruciuc. The chairman of the PEB refused to correct the error, arguing that „... the lists have been sent to Chisinau already, and that person can still vote...”.

On July 22, 2009, Lilia Polisciuc, chair of the PEB of the polling station No. 3 in Floresti, was taking off the voter lists the persons who were abroad. Upon the intervention of a Promo-LEX observer, who explained that it was against the law to do so, she restored the initial list.

In the monitoring period covered by this report, Viorel Furtuna (Promo-LEX observer) requested repeatedly that Valentina Castravet, secretary of the PEB from the village of Molovata, district of Dubasari, include him in the voter list. Valentina Castravet told Viorel Furtuna that he would be included in the supplementary list. The voter list at that polling station also contains a mistake in the spelling of the name of Dina Postica (born in 1921, on the list as Irina Postica). Also, in the same list, the ID information of 20 persons is missing.

At the polling station No. 15 in Oxentia village, underage citizen Botnaru Nicolae, born in December 1991, was included in the voter list.

At the polling station No.1 in the town of Causeni, 26 of the 428 persons included in the list are passed away, and 58 persons do not have ID information. At the polling station No. 2 in Causeni, 26 persons entered on the list between numbers 356 and 407 don’t have their ID information included in the list.

At the polling station No. 1 in the town Rezina, the Promo-LEX monitor, Valeriu Rusu was allowed to access the electoral list only where was written his name (thus, the electors from the number 546 up to 562). After examining the name of the elector mentioned on this list he found out 3 dead persons.

Public Display of Voter Lists

On 24 July 2009, at the polling station No. 4 in Berezchi, district of Anenii Noi, the voter lists were not publicly posted.

On 24 July 2009, at the polling station No. 29 in Mereni, district of Anenii Noi, the voter lists were not publicly displayed either.

On the same day, voter lists were not displayed for public view in the following localities in the district of Rezina: Tipova (polling station No.21), Echimaui (polling station No.13), Mateuti (polling station No.23), Pripiceni-Rezesi (polling station No. 31), Tareuca (polling station No. 40), Gordinesti (polling station No. 16).

On 24 July 2009, at the polling station No. 10 in Firladeni village, district of Causeni, the voter lists were not displayed; Maria Manza, chairperson of the PEB, argued it was because the list was undergoing verification.

On 24 July 2009, voter lists were not displayed for public view in the following towns and villages of the district of Floresti: the town of Floresti (polling stations Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6), Bahranesti (polling station No. 12), Ghindesti (polling station No. 30), town of Ghindesti (polling station No. 7), Cenusă (polling station No. 57), Gvozdova (polling station No. 35), Lunga (polling station No. 45), Ivanovca (polling station No. 61), Varvareuca (polling station No. 68), Gura Cainarului (polling station No. 36), Bobulesti (polling station No. 34), Prajila (polling station No. 50), Vertiujeni (polling station No. 72), Octeabrscoe (polling station No. 71), Bursuc (polling station No. 41), Japca (polling station No. 43), Cunicea (polling stations Nos. 25, 26 si 27), Gara Unchitesti (polling station No. 24), Cuhurestii de Jos (polling station No. 22).

The Promo-LEX observers could not verify voter lists in the villages of Gvozdova, Maiscoe and Ivanovca in the district of Floresti because the PEBs were closed.

On 20 July 2009 in Lunga and Bahranesti, district of Floresti, the chairs of the respective PEBs, Aliona Cernei and Ludmila Frecautan, denied observers access to the lists, demanding that they show their accreditations.

On 22 July 2009, the voter list was not displayed in the village of Firladeni, district Causeni.

II. UNDUE INFLUENCE ON AND INTIMIDATION OF VOTERS

On 21 July 2009 in the village Izvoare, district of Floresti, an electoral meeting with representatives of PCRM was organized. Doctors, teachers and local government servants were brought to the meeting in an organized manner. The interim chair of the Floresti District Council, Procopie Sura, was heard threatening the participants that if they do not vote for PCRM „... a civil war will erupt, and the Romanians from the other side of Prut river will take over the lands they controlled before Moldova was liberated...”; he was also heard saying that „...on April 7 the Romanian youth was waiting at the border for a sign to cross the Prut [river]...”, and that „...thanks to President Voronin, the country avoided bloodshed...”.

On 23 July 2009, in Floresti town, during public electoral debates, organized at the regional office of the Contact Center, Procopie Sura was observed intimidating citizen Verenciuc who wanted to address questions to the participating contestants.

On 22 July 2009 in Varnita, district of Anenii Noi, voters had a meeting with Vlad Filat, representative of PLDM. When Dumitru Uratu (representative of PPCD) addressed a question, Tudor Serbov (mayor of Varnita, representative of AMN) threatened him that if he would ask more questions, he would be dismissed from the room.

On 22 July 2009, Alexei Baluta, representing gas company Moldova-Gaz, had a meeting with the residents of the village of Tanatari, district Causeni, in front of the mayor’s office. The meeting discussed the gasification of the village and residents’ contributions to that project. Answering a question from resident Osadce Gheorghe „... what should we do to boost gasification of the village? ...”, Alexei Baluta answered: „Vote for the PCRM and the village will be gasified quicker and cheaper”.

On 23 July 2009, at 10.00 a.m. four young women (aged 18 to 20 years) were distributing PL electoral leaflets on the Ciprian Porumbescu street in Floresti. A police car stopped next to them, and a representative of the Interior Ministry came out of it, approached the girls and threatened them that if they don’t stop distributing materials, they would be arrested for 3 hours.

On 23 July 2009, a voter’s meeting with PCRM candidate [and Prime Minister] Zinaida Greceanii was held at the Culture Hall of Anenii Noi. Mme Greceanii came to the meeting using her official car, plate number RM G 001, and was accompanied by two cars with the special plate numbers SP 050 and MAI 0335. The meeting was also attended by Alexandru Snegur (mayor of Speia, district of Anenii Noi), who called to vote for PCRM. Calmac Serghei (farmer from Harbovat), Bobrova Raisa (school principal from Puhaceni) and Golban Victor (head of Medicine Center) campaigned for the same electoral contestant, noting how many changes in the district were possible only under the current government. A source that requested anonymity told the Promo-LEX observer that many employees were forced to come to the meeting. Approximately eight persons were brought with a “UAZ” bus that belongs to the regional Emergency

Medical Care. Other people were brought by a bus from Mereni, Anenii Noi, which operates the Mereni-Chisinau bus route.

On 23-24 July 2009, in the town of Stefan Voda, the employees of the state company "Posta Moldovei" [Post of Moldova – n.tr.] distributed advertising materials. The cover page of their leaflet contains a big text "CHOOSE No.1, choose a team of professionals", and under the word CHOOSE, with smaller font in yellow, the text „Moldova postal operator". Post workers distributed the same informational leaflets, together with the newspaper „Comunistul" in the areas of the following polling stations in Rezina district: the town of Rezina (polling stations Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Bosernita (polling station No.6), Ciorna (polling station No. 7), Stohnaia (polling station No. 8), Pripiceni-Rezesi (polling station No. 31), Lipiceni (polling station No. 22), Mateuti (polling station No. 23), Tarasova (polling station No. 38), Piscaresti (polling station No. 36), Papauti (polling station No. 28), Echimaui (polling station No. 13), Saharna Noua (polling station No. 32), Buciusca (polling station No. 33), Tapova (polling station No. 21), Ignatei (polling station No. 19), Cuizauca (polling station No. 12), Ghiduleni si Roscanii de Sus. The same set of materials was distributed in village Holercani, Dubasari district.

On 22 July 2009, in the village of Izvoare, district Floresti, Valentina Novac, social assistant in the village, and Svetlana Lupu, secretary of the mayor's office, were observed distributing food products (cereals, pasta) to village residents. When distributing the products, they mentioned these were from the PCRM. Approximately 200 residents of the villages Izvoare and Bezeni, district Floresti, received food packs.

III. ELECTORAL CONTESTANTS

Intimidation of Electoral Contestants

On 21 July 2009, in village Holercani, district Dubasari, Natalia Bascaneanu (PL supporter) was verbally aggressed and threatened with physical abuse if she didn't stop campaigning for PL. The threats came from unidentified persons.

On 23 July 2009 in village Holercani, district Dubasari, when PDM supporters were campaigning door-to-door, the sector police inspector demanded that they go home or else would need to be forcedly „dispersed".

On 19 July 2009, mayor of Pripiceni-Razesii, district Rezina, called the mayor's office employees to vote PCRM, otherwise they would be sacked.

Offering Gifts During Electoral Activities

On 23 July 2009, in the school of the village of Telita, a voters meeting with PCRM representatives was held. The PCRM candidate, Bondari Veaceslav, said that if the local residents vote for PCRM, "... there will be help in covering the school yard with concrete ...". On 24 July 2009, two tons of cement and a truck of gravel were already dispatched in the school yard. The school principal, Nadejda Chelmenciuc, and the chief administrator, Lebedi Aliona, signed the reception papers for the materials.

On 23 July 2009, the director of the daycare in the village of Tanatari, district Causeni, Mariana Agafii, organized a meeting with parents. Nicolae Munteanu (head of the regional forestry) and Iurie Muntean (PCRM candidate, but presented as deputy minister of economics and trade). The daycare director thanked the PCRM representatives for their help provided to acquire new beds and a washing machine for the daycare.

On 24 July 2009, the PCRM organized a concert in village Serpeni, district Anenii Noi, between hours 20:00 – 22.00. During the concert, Bondari Veaceslav (candidate of PCRM) promised that "... if Serpeni votes 70% Communists, he would personally contribute to the reconstruction of the children's camping base in the village ...".

Posting Campaign Materials

On 19 July 2009 in village Dorotcaia, district Dubasari, campaigning materials were posted for the first time during this campaign.

On 20 July 2009 in village Unchitesti-Niculaeni, a PCRM agitation poster was posted on the door to the polling station No. 23.

On 22 July 2009 in village Cosernita, district Floresti, local mayor Ion Cojocaru took off all the agitation materials of electoral contestants, except PCRM. The mayor instructed the security guard to protect PCRM posters from destruction.

In the night of 22 to 23 July 2009 in Anenii Noi, one evening before the arrival to the town of PCR candidate Zinaida Greceanii, the PCR regional office was vandalized, and their campaign posters were destroyed.

On July 2009 in village Holercani, district Dubasari, shortly after the materials were posted (time period between 10.30 and 11.00 a.m.), Cirmat Pantelimon (the security guard of the mayor's office) deteriorated the PL announcements about an upcoming electoral meeting, as well as the PL's campaign posters.

In the localities controlled by the illegal Tiraspol administration there are no special areas for posting campaign materials. Thus contestants place their information and campaign posters on the walls of residential buildings (Leningrad and Biruintei streets in Bender city, for example).

IV. MISUSE OF PUBLIC OFFICE AND RESOURCES FOR ELECTORAL PURPOSES

On 17 July 2009 in village Sanatauca, district Floresti, during a public meeting of the village, mayor Gradinaru Iurie emphasized that ... thanks to the PCR, the roof of the locality's lyceum was repaired... premier Greceanii promised to repair the building of the Culture Hall if we vote PCR...".

In the period of 20 - 23 July 2009, in the village Peciste, district of Rezina, employees of the Mayor's office, Leahevici Lidia (in charge of conscription) and Anghel Petru (tax inspector), were noticed campaigning for PCR during working hours (between 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.). They were saying that if people don't vote for that party, the situation in the country will get worse.

On 21 July 2009 in the Culture Hall in Causeni town, PPCD organized an electoral meeting, attended by deputy premier Iurie Rosca and Dinu Turcanu, PPCD candidate. The observers noted an increased number of traffic police cars on that day on all many intersections in Causeni.

On 22 July 2009, at 12:15 p.m. in village Sanatauca, district Floresti, Grigore Cojocaru, head of department within the Floresti District Council (not suspended from office), was distributing campaigning materials of the PCR, using his official car, a NIVA with the plate number FL CR 602.

In the period covered by this report, in the village of Cirmateni, district Causeni, social assistants went door-to-door to the elderly in the village and offer them food packages on behalf of the electoral contestant AMN. The packs contain sugar, pasta, cereals and rice.

On 26 July 2009, an electoral meeting with the PCR was held in the Culture Hall of village Cocieri, district Dubasari. Grigore Policinski (chair of the Dubasari district), Raisa Spinovski (PCR candidate), Vasiliu Sova (PCR candidate) and Tudor Copaci (introduced as deputy minister of economics and trade) were present. Grigore Policinski came to the meeting using his official car with plate number RM A 300. Leaflets „Choose No.1” of the Moldovan Post were distributed at the entrance to the meeting.

On 26 July 2009, the priest of the Volintiri village, district Stefan Voda asked parishioners who were present at the liturgy to enter in the church barefooted, saying that on the floor are the carpets donated by the electoral candidate. Meanwhile, he encouraged the parishioners to give their votes for this electoral candidate.

V. PERFORMANCE OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Observers noted that some PEBs were still not open on July 24 2009: in village Berezchi, district Anenii Noi, and village Pripiceni-Razesii, district Rezina.

In villages Gura Cainarului and Ivanovca, district Floresti, PEBs have not posted any announcements or a working hours schedule.

On 24 July 2009, chair of the PEB No. 73 in Zaluceni, district Floresti, Tatiana Mihai, refused to provide the Promo-LEX observers with details on the operation of the election bureau.

Involvement of Electoral Officials in the Campaign

In the reported period in village Trifesti, district Rezina, member of the PEB No. 39, Condrea Svetlana (proposed by the AMN), was observed campaigning for the AMN.

VI. CAMPAIGN COVERAGE IN THE TRANSNISTRIAN REGION MEDIA

Electoral Advertising

In the reporting period, the PSD and UCM placed electoral advertising materials in the Transnistrian media. These materials are presented as news, without the remark „Electoral Advertising” or „Paid from the Election Fund”. Since 20 July, the news portal **Lenta PMR** displayed a banner of the PSD calling visitors to vote for the „Martisor”. On 24 July an advertising material appeared on the same portal entitled „*PSD and UCM will pass the threshold*”, which attempts to convince the Transnistrian voters that 6.1% of the voters would support PSD and UCM, according to a sociological poll conducted in July. The text is accompanied by the electoral symbol of the PSD-UCM, which is larger than the usual size of images used in news on that portal. On 21 July the **Ruskiy Proryv** weekly published on a 1/3 of a page an „*Appeal of the PSD and UCM leaders to the voters in Transnistria*”, accompanied by a picture in which PSD leader Dumitru Braghis shakes hands with UCM leader Vasile Tarlev. The same text was republished on 2 July in „**Novaya Gazeta**”, this time without a picture and covering 1/4 of a page.

Electoral Contestants

The Transnistrian media did not provide equal coverage of the electoral contestants participating in the 29 July early elections. Parties that appeared most frequently in the region’s media newscasts were PCRM, PDM, and PSD+UCM. The **Lenta PMR** news portal favorites were PCRM and PDM. On 19 July the portal published a statement by Marian Lupu during an electoral meeting in Balti, in which he stated that the PCRM was involved in organizing the April 7 destructions, and on 20 July it published a report that Marian Lupu had become chairman of the PDM. During the days of 20 and 21 July **Lenta PMR** posted news that give the impression that in Republica Moldova everyone votes for PCRM. Those „everyone” are members of the „Association of veterans in Moldova”, national minorities as well as respondents in the Public Opinion barometer survey, conducted by the Institute for Public Policies in Chisinau. Dorin Chirtoaca was presented by the **Lenta PMR** on 20 July as a pro-Romanian criminal who „*spent too much time at an electoral meeting in a village thus disturbing the public order*”. On 21 July **Lenta PMR** published covert advertising of PSD+UCM. In the first published piece, PSD leader Dumitru Braghis accused Marian Lupu of hindering the unification of PSD and PD, and in the second piece, Dumitru Braghis repeated a statement by UCM leader Vasile Tarlev, launched in the media the week before, that „*PCRM destroys land owners*”.

News agency **Novyi Region** tries to diminish the importance of the PCRM in Moldova, suggesting already in a news item published on 20 July that „*PCRM will get three times less votes than in the previous elections*”. The same piece suggested that four political parties: PCRM, PL, PDM, and PLDM, will pass the threshold to Parliament. **Novyi Region** also informed the citizens about the number of parties that will be included in the voting ballot. This information was reiterated in a news piece on July 23 about the number of contestants in the early elections.

Novaya Gazeta, in its issue of 22 July, favors the PCRM in an article about the political situation created in the context of early elections in Moldova. The article states that „*The Party of Communists remains the strongest party*”, and that its leader, V. Voronin, is „*a charismatic leader*”. The weekly throws in an electoral prediction, according to which the PCRM will get 49-51%, M. Lupu: 11-13%, M. Ghimpu-D. Chirtoaca: 13-17 %, AMN: 5-7%, and PLDM: 10-12 %. A special place is devoted, according to the publication, to PSD+UCM, which will gather 5%. This last affirmation constitutes hidden advertising, as the figure of 5 % is present in the electoral ads of the Braghis-Tarlev alliance.

In a report during the program „Nablyudatel” aired on 18 July, **TV PMR** dedicates several minutes to Dorin Chirtoaca who, according to the experts interviewed by **TV PMR**, will garner the most votes in the early elections. Less attention is paid to the AMN, as this party, according to the media outlet, has every chance of not acceding to Parliament because of its lack of new ideas.

Number of news about Moldovan elections in the Transnistrian media

	Novaya Gazeta	Pridnestrovye	TV PMR	TSV	Olvia Press	NR2	Regnum	Lenta PMR
06 July			1					4
07 July		1				1	2	4
08 July	2		1					5
09 July							2	
10 July				1		1	5	7
11 July				1			3	
12 July								1
13 July							6	5
14 July						3	1	7
15 July			1		1	2	4	11
16 July							1	12
17 July							2	2
18 July			1	1				1
19 July								2
20 July						3	2	5
21 July						2	1	8
22 July	3		1				1	3
23 July		1				2		2
24 July							1	5
25 July								
	5	2	5	3	2	15	38	81

In the period 16-25 July news portal **Lenta PMR** posted most news items referring to the early elections in Moldova. A majority of those items were taken from media affiliated with the electoral contestant [PCRM], including Moldpres, Omega, Novosti-Moldova, and Nezavisimaya Moldova. **Lenta PMR** provided extensive and positive coverage of the PCRM. **Regnum** is an agency that supports the independence of the Transnistrian region, which is why it posted items aimed at incrementing the idea that the PCRM is incapable of holding negotiations with the Tiraspol leaders, and favoring parties which list in their programs a solution to the Transnistrian issue by recognizing Transnistria's independence. In a period of three weeks, **Regnum** maintained the idea that the opposition will want unification with Romania if it wins in the early elections. The news agency **Olvia Press**, **TV PMR** and daily paper **Pridnestrovie** covered Moldova as a "neighbor state," and emphasized the idea of the need to „harmonize" the Transnistrian Constitution with the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

VII. CONCERNS

In the light of the stated findings, the Promo-LEX monitoring effort states its concerns with the following:

- The quality of the compilation and the incompleteness of voter lists;
- The impossibility to verify voter lists in the localities where these have not been made public;
- The continued use and promotion of hate speech and national xenophobia;
- Unequal treatment of electoral contestants by local government officials;
- Involvement in the campaign of officials of public institutions;
- Intimidation of electoral contestants and voters by local government officials;
- Continued ignoring of the electoral rights and freedoms of voters from the Transnistrian region.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings and observations made so far, the Promo-LEX Association recommends:

- Developing an efficient mechanism for compiling voter lists;
- Observation of legal norms providing for equal opportunities for all electoral contestants;
- Investigation of cases of intimidation of electoral contestants or voters by the respective bodies;
- Developing a mechanism of information, education and electoral involvement of citizens from the Transnistrian region.