

## Chamber of Local Authorities

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### **Observation of local elections in the Republic of Moldova (14 June 2015)**

Monitoring Committee  
Rapporteur:<sup>1</sup> Line Skoii VENNESLAND-FRASER, Norway (L, ECR)

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#### *Summary*

Following the invitation by the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova, the Congress deployed a 24-member delegation including five members of the EU Committee of the Regions to observe the general local elections held on 14 June 2015. On Election Day, eleven Congress teams visited more than 150 polling stations throughout the country and observed the voting as well as the counting process. The Congress did not observe the run-off elections organised on 28 June 2015.

With the exception of some incidents and different irregularities, voting day was calm and orderly and the electoral administration operated well, based on a legal framework which could benefit from a review to eliminate inconsistencies but is, by and large, in line with European standards for free, fair and democratic elections. The Congress delegation recognised the legal amendments introduced by the Moldovan authorities in order to better regulate the financing of parties and campaign activities, despite their late introduction, and efforts made to further improve the quality of voters' lists, notably through the use of the State Automated Information System "Elections" (SAISE). However, Moldovans living *de facto* abroad were allowed to vote in local elections if they were in the country on Election Day which is at odds with previous Congress texts<sup>2</sup> and should be addressed to prevent possible fraud.

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1 Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions  
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress  
SOC: Socialist Group  
ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group  
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group  
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

2 Recommendation 369(2015) and Resolution 378(2015) on Electoral lists and voters residing *de facto* abroad.

Therefore, at the centre of Congress recommendations is the revision of residence requirements for voting in local elections, notably the clarification between domicile and temporary residence, in order to avoid concerns related to supplementary lists on Election Day and ensure transparency and trust in the overall electoral process. Further Congress recommendations include the need to overhaul regulations for the registration of independent candidates, which could be called over-restrictive, and the promotion of women's participation at all levels of electoral administration and as candidates. Generally, there is a need to fully implement the National Decentralisation Strategy in order to strengthen local self-government and ensure effective administration at the grassroots' level.

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION<sup>3</sup>**

1. Following the invitation by the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova to observe local elections held in the country on 14 June 2015, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities refers to:

- a. Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Committee of Ministers' Statutory Resolution (2000)1 on the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;
- b. the principles laid down in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122) which was ratified by the Republic of Moldova on 2 October 1997;
- c. Congress Resolution 306(2010)REV on Observation of local and regional elections – strategy and rules of the Congress;
- d. Congress Resolution 353(2013)REV on Congress post-monitoring and post-observation of elections: developing political dialogue.

2. It reiterates the fact that genuinely democratic local and regional elections are part of a process to establish and maintain democratic governance and observation of political participation at territorial level is a key element in the Congress' role as guardian of democracy at local and regional level.

3. The Congress welcomes the fact that – against the background of the current economic crisis combined with a massive financial scandal and the uncertainty about the geo-political orientation of the country – voting took place, except some incidents, in a peaceful and orderly manner and elections were, by and large, effectively administered, following a generally free and lively campaign.

4. The Congress recognises efforts made by the Moldovan authorities to further improve the legal framework for elections, in particular amendments aiming at a better regulation of financing parties and campaign activities, though the amendments were adopted shortly before the elections.

5. It acknowledges measures taken to ensure the accuracy of voters' lists, notably through the use of the State Automated Information System "Elections" (SAISE), by which voters' lists were generated, voters identified and checked against multiple voting and results were processed. However, Moldovans living *de facto* abroad are entitled to vote in local elections if staying in the country on Election Day which entails the risk of electoral fraud.

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<sup>3</sup> Preliminary draft recommendation approved by the Monitoring Committee on 17 September 2015.

Members of the Committee (Chamber of Local Authorities only):

*M. Angelopoulos, L. Ansala (alternate: R. Ervela), A. Babayev, T. Badan, S. Batson, V. Belikov, M. Bespalova, A. Bogdanovic, Z. Broz, X. Cadoret, M. Cardenas Moreno, D. Chirtoaca, M. Cools, J. Costa, P. Daly, J. Dillon, G. Doğanoglu, V. Dontu, J. Folling, M. Gauci, M. Guegan, M. Gulevskiy, H. Halldorsson, I. Hanzek, S. Harutyunyan, B. Hirs (alternate: M. Hollinger), J. Hlinka, G. Illes, A. Jaunsleinis, D. Jikia, H.B. Johansen, M. Juhkami, J-P. Klein, L. Kovacs (alternate: A. Magyar), L. Kroon, F. Lec, I. Loizidou, J. Mandico Calvo, T. Margaryan, G. Marsan, N. Mermagen, D. Milovanovic, A. Mimenov, V. Mitrofanovas, S. Mitrovski M. Monesi, A. Muzio, S. Paunovic, T. Popov, R. Rautava, R. Schäfer, I. Schörling, A. Shkemi, S. Siukaeva, A-M. Sotiriadou, D. Straupaite, A. Torres Pereira, A. Ugues, LO. Vasilescu, R. Vergili, B. Vöhringer, H. Weninger, J. Wienen, K. Wiswe, D. Wrobel.*

N.B.: The names of members who took part in the vote are in italics.

Secretariat of the Committee: S. Poirel

6. In the light of the above, the Congress invites the authorities to overhaul the legal framework, notably to eliminate inconsistencies and mend loopholes, and further optimise the practical side of electoral management, in particular to:

a. adjust legal provisions on residence requirements for voting in local elections to the respective Congress recommendation in the context of its report on electoral lists and voters residing *de facto* abroad;<sup>4</sup>

b. on this issue, establish clarity between “domicile” and “temporary residence”, to avoid concerns related to supplementary voters’ lists on Election Day;

c. revise the currently over-restrictive provisions related to the registration of independent candidates in order to provide a level playing field to all contestants running in local elections;<sup>5</sup>

d. strengthen the oversight and enforcement mechanisms of different bodies with regard to the financing of parties and campaign activities and concerning the impartiality of media coverage during electoral campaigns.

7. In addition, the Congress encourages the Moldovan authorities to introduce legal provisions ensuring increased women’s participation at all levels of the electoral management and as candidates in elections.

8. In conclusion, there is a need to fully implement the National Decentralisation Strategy in order to further strengthen local self-government in the Republic of Moldova and ensure effective administration at the grassroots’ level.

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4 Recommendation 369(2015) and Resolution 378(2015) on Electoral lists and voters residing *de facto* abroad.

5 Recommendation 375(2015) and Resolution 382(2015) on Criteria for standing in local and regional elections.

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM<sup>6</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

1. Following an invitation by Iurie Ciocan, Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission, dated 9 April 2015, the Congress observed the local elections aiming at electing 898 Mayors and 11,680 first- and second-level Councillors in the Republic of Moldova on 14 June 2015.
2. The electoral mission took place from 9 to 15 June 2015 and comprised 24 members from 20 countries including five members of the EU Committee of the Regions and a member of the Congress' Group of Independent Experts. It was headed by Amy Koopmanschap (The Netherlands, SOC). Line Vennesland-Fraser (Norway, ECR/CRE) was nominated Rapporteur on this mission. On Election Day, eleven Congress' teams were deployed to more than 150 polling stations<sup>7</sup> throughout the country and observed the voting as well as the counting process. The Congress did not observe the run-off elections organised in 457 localities on 28 June 2015.
3. The good co-operation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) during the preparation of the mission should be highlighted. A joint press conference with OSCE/ODIHR was held in Chisinau on 15 June 2015 to present preliminary findings.
4. Previously the Congress observed local elections in the Republic of Moldova in 2007 and 2011.
5. The following Report focuses specifically on issues arising out of exchanges the Congress' delegation held with interlocutors in the context of the local elections held in the Republic of Moldova on 14 June 2015 and on observations made by the members of the delegation on Election Day.
6. The Congress wishes to thank all of those who met the delegation for their open and constructive dialogue. It thanks the Moldovan authorities for their support in preparing this mission. Special thanks go to the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Jose-Luis Herrero, and his team for their valuable support and to the Head of the Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) of OSCE/ODIHR, Kimmo Kiljunen, and his colleagues for the fruitful co-operation.

### 1. Political Context

The Republic of Moldova is a parliamentary-presidential democratic system, with a Parliament directly elected and the President elected by the Parliament. Parliament is unicameral, has 101 seats and is elected on the basis of proportional representation in a single nationwide constituency. After 2009, there were several Parliamentary elections held because of the difficulty to elect the President with the necessary three-fifths majority.

The latest Parliamentary elections held in November 2014 were the eighth of this kind since the country's independence in 1991 but the first to be held after the adoption of the Association Agreement with the EU and since the governing Alliance for European Integration (AEI) collapsed mid-2013, after a vote of no-confidence.<sup>8</sup>

All in all, the pro-European parties received 55 seats (45%) of the 101-seat Parliament but the Socialists remained the strongest party countrywide (21.5%, 25 seats). The Communist Party, led by former President Vladimir Voronin, fell from their 15-year perch as the most popular party, dropping from around 30% to 17%. Voronin's turn from a pro-Moscow to a pro-Europe stance at mid-campaign

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<sup>6</sup> With the contribution of Prof. dr. Aistė Lazauskiene, Šiauliai University, Lithuania.

<sup>7</sup> The deployment plan of the Congress' delegation on Election Day as well as further details on the delegation, programme and the joint preliminary conclusions presented with OSCE/ODIHR can be found in the appendices.

<sup>8</sup> IFES' white paper report on the 2014 Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova

[http://www.ifes.org/-/media/Files/Publications/White%20PaperReport/2014/2014\\_November%20Moldova%20Parliamentary%20Election%20FAQ.pdf](http://www.ifes.org/-/media/Files/Publications/White%20PaperReport/2014/2014_November%20Moldova%20Parliamentary%20Election%20FAQ.pdf)

and the Russian President's endorsement of the candidate of the Party of Socialists, Igor Dodon, assisted the rise of the Socialists and the decline of the Communist Party.<sup>9</sup>

The last general local elections were held on 5 and 19 June 2011 (with the exception of the territory controlled by the *de facto* Transnistrian authorities), which were the fifth local elections to take place in the Republic of Moldova since its independence.<sup>10</sup> According to the Congress' Election Observation Report,<sup>11</sup> the vote brought about greater political diversity and new political players. The elections took place in a more open media environment and largely met OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe standards regarding election administration and voting procedures. The vote was of particular importance because of the inability of successive Parliaments to elect the Head of State. However, remaining legal, administrative and regulatory issues needed to be addressed, in order to ensure continued progress, not least with regard to voter registration.

The 2015 general local elections were held against the background of a long-lasting tug-of-war over the geopolitical orientation of the country. The Moldovan political scene is polarised between the pro-Russian camp and the pro-European one. The drawn-out negotiations on the governmental coalition after the 2014 Parliamentary elections created a climate of political deadlock and uncertainty.

In addition, in late 2014, the Central Bank of the Republic of Moldova discovered that three banks<sup>12</sup> lent 1 billion Dollars (approximately 927 million Euros) to unknown entities, meaning that the money disappeared. This broad corruption scandal in the banking sector has been overwhelming the national debate since then. Besides the corruption scandal, the whole economy of the Republic of Moldova is in crisis<sup>13</sup>: the Moldovan currency, the Lei, has lost almost half its value in February 2014 which led to mass withdrawals of deposits, creating an even broader crisis within the banking sector. Moreover, since the Republic of Moldova signed the Eastern Partnership Agreement with the EU, the Russian Federation applies an embargo on most agricultural products of the Republic.<sup>14</sup>

The resignation of Prime Minister Chiril Gaburici on 12 June 2015, only two days prior to Election Day, reinforced the uncertainty about the future of the ruling coalition. Chiril Gaburici headed a minority Government including two pro-European parties (Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova and Democratic Party of Moldova) and supported in Parliament by the Party of the Communists. As official reason for his resignation the Prime Minister mentioned investigations opened by the Prosecutor General on his potentially fake school diploma. However, earlier that week, Chiril Gaburici had suggested the Prosecutor General should resign if his Office was unable to conclude the investigations on the disappearance of 1 billion Dollars from three banks. On 22 June, between the first round of local elections and the run-offs, Natalia Gherman, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, was appointed Prime Minister by President Nicolae Timofti.

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<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/moldova-s-woes-make-it-fair-game-for-russia/512744.html>

10 According to the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 5 and 19 June 2011, the results are as follows:

**Mayors:** Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova 203, Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova 286, Liberal Party 97, Democratic Party of Moldova 220, and independent candidates 68.

**Second-level Councils:** Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova 434, Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova 300, Liberal Party 130, Democratic Party of Moldova 227 and independent candidates 9.

**First-level Councils:** Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova 3,438, Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova 3,039, Liberal Party 1,162, Democratic Party of Moldova 2,264 and independent candidates 336.

11 Report on the Local election in Albania (8 May 2011), adopted by the Chamber of Local Authorities in October 2011, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

12 Banca de Economii (nationalised in November 2014), Banca Sociala and Unibank are concerned. These banks have been managed by the Central Bank since the scandal was discovered.

13 The Unfolding Financial Crisis Threatening Moldova, Forbes <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2015/05/20/the-unfolding-financial-crisis-threatening-moldova/>

14 European Commission Report, Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the Republic of Moldova, Progress in 2014 and recommendations for actions

## 2. Administrative structure at local and regional level

Administratively, the Republic of Moldova is divided in 898 first-level administrative units and 34 second-level administrative units. The first-level is composed of 48 towns and 850 villages. The second-level consists of 32 Districts<sup>15</sup> (*Raiions*) and three municipalities<sup>16</sup>. The Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia is also considered a second-level administrative unit<sup>17</sup>.

The general principle is that Local Government Units in the Republic of Moldova are composed of two organs at the first level. Voters elect the first-level Council and the Mayor (*Primar*). The members of first-level Councils are elected for four years under a proportional representation system, without a threshold. The election takes place on the basis of lists presented by the political parties and blocs. The number of first-level Council members elected in each administrative unit depends on the size of the population and is determined by the Law on Local Government.<sup>18</sup> The Mayor of a first-level unit is elected directly by the population. At the second level, voters elect directly Districts Councils. The President of each District is elected among the District Councillors by the District Council itself. The District Council coordinates the activities of the first-level Councils in order to provide public services on a District or Municipal level. In Chişinău, Balţi and Comrat second-level Municipalities, voters elect directly the Mayor and the Council.

Over the last 20 years, the Republic of Moldova has undergone three main local government reforms:<sup>19</sup>

1994-1998: The Republic of Moldova transitioned from the Soviet system to a new administrative division by creating 38 *Raiions*, including five in the area of the left bank of the Dniestr. The Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATUG) was also established in 1994 and comprised three *Raiions* (*Dolay*) which are still part of the current administrative division of this Unit.

1998-2001: The Territorial Government Law of 1998 reorganised the *Raiions* on the right bank of the Dniestr by grouping them into nine *Judeţe* (counties). This local and regional re-organisation was followed by a major administrative reform including a fresh redistribution of powers, responsibilities and resources.

2001-2003: In December 2001, further to the victory of the Communist Party in the Parliamentary elections, a new Local Government reform was adopted, which was implemented after the 2003 local elections and brought about the return of the *Raiions* and a relative weakening of local autonomy.

Current challenges at the grassroots' level include the concrete implementation of the National Decentralisation Strategy adopted in 2012. According to this policy, local self-government and financial autonomy are seen as essential elements for European integration. Decentralisation of power and strengthening of local self-government were among the priorities of the 2011-2014 Work Programme of the Government and included also the reform of the public administration. It proposed the transfer of certain powers from central Government to local authorities, especially Local Councils, in order to allow them greater control over their budgets (including the right to set local taxes and the right to retain any income generated from the lease of land or property).

Under this Strategy, Parliament adopted the reform on the local finance system that entered into force at the beginning of 2015. It improves fiscal decentralisation and provides Municipalities with more funds.<sup>20</sup> However, the National Decentralisation Strategy has not yet been fully implemented and

15 Anenii Noi, Basarabasca, Briceni, Cahul, Cantemir, Călăraşi, Căuşeni, Cimişlia, Criuleni, Donduşeni, Drochia, Dubăsari, Edineţ, Făleşti, Floreşti, Glodeni, Hînceşti, Ialoveni, Leova, Nisporeni, Ocniţa, Orhei, Rezina, Rîşcani, Sîngerei, Soroca, Străşeni, Şoldăneşti, Ştefan Vodă, Taraclia, Teleneşti, Ungheni

16 The three Municipalities are Chişinău, Balţi and Comrat. Following the military conflict in the Transnistrian region, Tiraspol and Bender, which are also Municipalities, are no longer under the control of Chişinău.

17 Comrat is also considered a second-level Municipality.

18 Under 1500 (9 Councillors), 1501- 2500 (11), 2501- 5000 (13), 5001 - 7000 (15); 7001-10 000 (17), 10 001-20 000 (23), 20 001- 50 000 (27), 50 001-100 000 (33), 100 001-200 000 (35), more than 200000 (43). The Chisinau Municipal Council consists of 51 members.

19 CG(22)10, 13 March 2012, Local and regional democracy in the Republic of Moldova. Monitoring Committee. [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1919577&Site=Congress#P308\\_39889](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1919577&Site=Congress#P308_39889)

20 [http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/operations/projects/poverty\\_reduction/joint-integrated-local-development-programme.html](http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/joint-integrated-local-development-programme.html)

progress is limited.<sup>21</sup> According to Congress' interlocutors, the amendment on local financing was a step into the right direction but not sufficient and the politicised decision-making on the distribution of funds remains problematic.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Electoral management

#### 3.1. Legal framework and electoral system

Local elections are regulated by the Constitution and the Electoral Code of in the Republic of Moldova. The legal framework is supplemented by other laws.<sup>23</sup> The Electoral Code was firstly adopted in 1997 and regulates all direct elections and referenda in the country, except for the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia. It was amended several times, most recently in April 2015. These amendments especially address party and campaign financing and underline the specific role of the Central Electoral Commission in monitoring the electoral financing.

The latest amendments include also the prohibition for using State and foreign symbols and images and involving foreign citizens in campaigning. Other amendments provide more specific sanctions for violations of the Election Code and elaborate on criminal liability for certain acts such as vote-buying. In addition, the Criminal Code was amended to criminalise illegal campaign funding.<sup>24</sup>

The 14 June local elections were conducted to elect 898 Mayors and 11,680 first- and second-level Councillors. The latter were elected under a proportional electoral system without a threshold. Mayors were elected under a two-round majoritarian system. If no candidate wins an absolute majority in the first round, a run-off between the two candidates with the highest number of votes is to be held two weeks later. At least 25 % of registered voters in an administrative unit are required for the election to be valid. There is no turnout requirement for a second round.

#### 3.2. Electoral administration bodies

The four-tiered organisation of electoral bodies for the conduct of the 2015 local elections included the Central Election Commission (CEC), 35 District Electoral Councils (DECs) – Level 2, 896 District Electoral Councils – Level 1 and 1977 Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs, polling stations). Voting did not take place on the territory controlled by the Transnistrian *de facto* authorities.

The CEC is composed of nine members appointed for a five-year-term. One member is nominated by the President of the Republic of Moldova and eight members by the Parliament, respecting the proportional representation of the majority and of the opposition. The composition of the Commission is confirmed by Parliament. The Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary of the CEC are elected by the majority of its members. Incumbent Chairman Dr. Iuri Ciocan has been working in the CEC since 2003 and as Chairman since 2011.

According to the Electoral Code, the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary of the Central Electoral Commission shall work on a full time basis. Other members are convened by the Chairperson upon request. At least 55 days before the elections, the CEC creates electoral districts which correspond to the borders of second-level territorial-administrative units of the Republic of

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21 CG(22)10, 13 March 2012, Local and regional democracy in the Republic of Moldova. Monitoring Committee. [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1919577&Site=Congress#P308\\_39889](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1919577&Site=Congress#P308_39889); According to the Law on the Administrative Territorial Organisation, an administrative unit is established/maintained when it has at least 1,500 inhabitants and has enough financial resources. Also in this respect, implementation has not been completed. The localities with fewer than 1,500 inhabitants represent 28% of all Moldovan localities. They have a low financial potential and very poor infrastructure. Their weak resources and capacities for development considerably limit the prospects of satisfactory municipal management.

22 Congress' briefing with CALM (Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova), June 2015.

23 Including the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Assembly, the Criminal Code, the Code on Administrative Offences and the Audiovisual Code as well as Decisions and Regulations of the Central Election Commission.

24 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>



Moldova and of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Chisinau and Balti Municipalities. At least 50 days before Election Day, it creates District Electoral Councils.<sup>25</sup>

In order to conduct voting and counting of the votes, electoral districts are divided into Precincts. The latter are established by District Electoral Councils in localities based on the recommendation of Mayors of first-level unites, no later than 35 days before the elections. Precincts have between 30 and 3,000 voters.<sup>26</sup> Precinct Electoral Bureaus are established by the District Electoral Councils no later than 25 days before Election Day, they consist of an odd number of between five and eleven members.

First-level Councils nominate three candidates to the Precinct Electoral Bureaus. The other members of the PEBs are nominated by parties and other socio-political organisations represented in the Parliament on the date of its establishment (one candidate from each party or social-political organisation). If this is not enough, the rest of the members are nominated by the District Electoral Council, at the proposal of the Central Electoral Commission, on the basis of the Register of Electoral Officials.

Women's representation in electoral commissions varied between the different bodies. There was only one female member out of nine members of the CEC. However, in the vast majority of polling stations visited by the Congress' observers there were women managing the Precinct Electoral Bureau.<sup>27</sup>

An important institution subordinated to the Central Election Commission is the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET), established in line with Article 26 of the Electoral Code. The Centre has been established for the purpose of training and qualifying the electoral officials including the persons in the Register of Electoral Officials, their ongoing professional training and of the subjects involved in the election process as well as other interested persons.<sup>28</sup> As of 5 June, the CCET conducted some 500 seminars for 15,000 commissioners, observers and party representatives.

### 3.3. Complaints and appeals

The electoral complaint system is governed by the Election Code. Voters and candidates may challenge the actions/inactions and decisions made by the Electoral Councils and Bureaus as well as the actions/inactions of candidates. A complaint may be lodged with a Court of law but only after prior addressing the electoral body hierarchically superior to the body whose decision is challenged (except complaints related to the exercise of the right to vote or to the administration of elections lodged on E-Day).

Complaints on the coverage of the electoral campaign by the broadcasters which are under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova are examined by the Audio-visual Co-ordinating Council in accordance with the provisions of the Audio-visual Code and the complaints related to print media are examined by a Court of law.<sup>29</sup>

25 Electoral Code, Article 27, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf); two members of District Electoral Councils (DEC) – Level 1 are nominated as candidates by the first level Local Council. If there are no candidates nominated, the Central Electoral Commission takes a decision on the basis of the persons entered in the Register of Electoral Officials. Other candidates (one from each party or other social-political organisations) are nominated by the parties and other socio-political organisations (represented in Parliament as of the date when the Electoral District Councils were created). If this is not enough, the rest of the members are nominated by the Central Electoral Commission on the basis of the Register of Electoral Officials.

Two members of the District Electoral Councils (DEC) – Level 2 are nominated as candidates by the Courts of law, or, if applicable, by the Court of Appeal. The other two members are nominated by the second level local council of the Popular Assembly of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATUG). Parties and other social-political organisations (represented in Parliament on the date the District Electoral Council was created) nominate one candidate from each party or other social-political organisation. If this is not enough, the rest of the members are nominated by the Central Electoral Commission on the basis of the Register of Electoral Officials.

26 Electoral Code, Article 29, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

27 Nationwide, women represented some 52 % of DEC – Level 2 (some 29, 46, and 83 % of Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons and Secretaries, respectively) and some 74 % of DEC – Level 1 according to the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress), <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

28 <http://cicde.md/eng/despre-cicde-1/>

29 Electoral Code, Article 65, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

In the context of the June 2015 local elections, complaints and appeals were handled “in a timely and transparent manner overall” by the CEC.<sup>30</sup> Respective CEC sessions and Chisinau Court of Appeals hearings were open to the media and the public. DEC’s were said to have handled complaints “less efficiently and, at times, inconsistently”, compared to the CEC.<sup>31</sup>

During the whole electoral period, 85 complaints were filed to the DEC’s – Level 2. Out of those, 25 related to illegal campaigning, 17 to candidate registration, 54 to abuse of public office and 12 to the misuse of administrative resources. The others related to obstruction of campaigning, vote-buying and complaints on the media.

The CEC received 55 complaints and appeals, mostly related to candidate registration in DEC’s and campaign violations. It reviewed and made decisions on 18 complaints. Others were dismissed for not complying with procedural rules or as being outside its competence. 18 CEC decisions were appealed to the Chisinau Court of Appeals; two of them were upheld. Following, 16 judgments of the Chisinau Court of Appeals were appealed to the Supreme Court, which upheld 13 of them.<sup>32</sup> The confidence level in the complaint process differed among stakeholders.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.4. Voter registration and voters’ lists

Voter registration is passive in the Republic of Moldova and voters’ lists are drawn up based on the State Register of Voters (SRV), which is extracted from the State Population Register maintained by the Centre for State Information Resources (*Registru*). According to the Electoral Code, the lists of voters, created on the basis of the State Register of Voters, include all citizens who hold the right to vote<sup>34</sup> – those who turn 18 by E- Day – and have their domicile or residence on the territory of one polling station. A voter may be included only in one list of voters, in one polling station. The Central Electoral Commission used its State Automated Information System “Elections” (SAISE) to generate voters’ lists, check voters in every polling station on Election Day and gather the results.

A Regulation on the creation, management, distribution and update of the voters’ lists has been approved by the Central Electoral Commission<sup>35</sup> although the responsibilities of the *Registru*, the CEC and various public authorities for the accuracy of voters’ lists remain partially undefined which leads to a lack of accountability of the whole electoral process. In addition, the State Register of Addresses is incomplete while it is an essential component of the State Register of Voters, creating concerns about the inaccuracy of residence data.<sup>36</sup>

According to the CEC, preliminary voters’ lists included 2,821,657 registered voters as of 22 May 2015. This constituted an increase compared to the 2011 local elections and was explained mainly by the introduction of the new centralised system for producing voters’ lists. The quality of the voters’ lists mostly enjoyed confidence from stakeholders but the transparency and the accuracy of the lists remain a concern.<sup>37</sup>

From 25 May to 13 June 2015, voters could check their data at Precinct Electoral Bureaus and also online. During this period, 5,526 entries were modified in the SRV, most of which reassigned voters to another polling station.<sup>38</sup> However, because of an inspection of the National Center for Personal Data

<sup>30</sup> OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015

<sup>31</sup> OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015

<sup>32</sup> OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015

<sup>33</sup> Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

<sup>34</sup> Special restrictions on voting rights are in place for conscripted military personnel and for those declared incapable by a final Court decision. These restrictions are at odds with Paragraph 7.3 of 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document according to the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress)

<sup>35</sup> Electoral Code, Article 39, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014_eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015

<sup>37</sup> Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

<sup>38</sup> Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

to the CEC on 30 May, the CEC shut down its website for a few hours. According to Congress' interlocutors,<sup>39</sup> the verification process by voters could benefit from increased clarity and transparency; in particular the issue of inconsistent interpretation of the law on personal data protection should be clarified.

By law, a distinction is made between the "domicile" and the temporary "residence" of voters. If a voter has both, he/she is normally included in voter lists of his/her temporary "residence". Voters not included in a voters' list who could prove their residence were allowed to vote after registration on supplementary lists on Election Day. However, according to the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters of the Council of Europe Venice Commission, registration should not take place at the polling station on E-Day.<sup>40</sup>

The legal framework still allows Moldovans living *de facto* abroad to vote in local elections when they are in the country on the day of elections because there are no requirements for the duration of "domicile" or temporary "residence".<sup>41</sup> This is in contradiction to the conviction of the Congress according to which local issues should be decided by the electorate actually residing in a specific municipality.<sup>42</sup> This can also lead to possible misuse on Election Day. According to the observers from the domestic NGO "Promo-LEX", several cases of increased numbers of voters registered on voters' lists have been detected, with several persons registered on the same address in a period close to the elections.<sup>43</sup> Promo-LEX criticised that the current situation of voter registration in the Republic of Moldova enables electoral fraud and so may influence the electoral results by intentionally increasing the number of voters on the voters' lists in certain areas.

Voters' identification is made on the basis of ID cards. Citizens with expired identification documents (IDs) are not allowed to vote. On 1 June, the Central Election Commission requested the authorities to consider addressing this matter. The *Registru* declared their number at 152,685 and decided to issue free-of-charge temporary IDs for voting, from 9 to 14 June.<sup>44</sup> The Congress' delegation has not been aware of any particular problem related to that issue in polling stations.

### 3.5. Registration of parties and candidates

Eligibility requirements to stand for local election include the age of 18 for first- and second-level Council members and 25 for Mayor as well as Moldovan citizenship.<sup>45</sup> There is no residency requirement for candidates.

The right to nominate candidates is granted to political parties<sup>46</sup> and electoral blocs as well as to citizens through self-nomination upon submission of voter support signatures. Candidates' lists were registered by 19 (out of 42 eligible) parties and 2 electoral blocs. Some 1,000 independent candidates registered as well. In total, more than 67,000 candidates contested for the seats in 898 first-level Councils, 32 second-level District Councils and two second-level Municipalities (Chisinau and Balti), including 4,421 (22 % out of them women) for Mayors and 63,496 for first- and second-level Councillors (35 % out of them women). In Chisinau, four out of 17 Mayoral candidates were women, in Balti one out of ten. In Comrat, there were six male candidates only. In Chisinau, 248 out of 801

39 According to the Chairman of the CEC Dr. Iurie CIOCAN the Congress' delegation met in Chisinau in June 2015

40 Venice Commission, Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters – Guidelines and Explanatory Report, Opinion No. 190/2002, II.2, [http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2002)023rev-e)

41 Statement by Amy KOOPMANSCHAP, Head of the Delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Presentation of the Preliminary Findings and Conclusions further to the observation of local elections held in the Republic of Moldova on 14 June 2015

42 Recommendation 369(2015) and Resolution 378(2015) on Electoral lists and voters residing *de facto* abroad

43 Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015, REPORT No 3, [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1434303854.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1434303854.pdf)

44 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress), <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

45 Electoral Code, Article 124, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

46 On 8 April 2015, the Ministry of Justice provided a list of 43 eligible parties which was confirmed by the Central Election Commission. On 24 April, a Court decision cancelled the registration of the Communist Reformist Party (the party contested the 2014 Parliamentary elections despite a decision on deregistration was pending with the Ministry of Justice). A new list of 42 registered parties was submitted to the CEC and confirmed on 4 May according to the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015.

candidates for its Municipal Council were women.<sup>47</sup> There is no legal provision to ensure an equal participation of men and women in local election in the Republic of Moldova although, all in all, the number of women elected to local public office has risen over the past eight years.<sup>48</sup> Most political parties met a self-imposed 30 % quota of women candidates for first-level Councils in 2015 but the number of women candidates for second-level District Councillors and Mayors was lower.

The registration of independent candidates differs and is, according to the Congress,<sup>49</sup> over-restrictive. Independent candidates for first- and second-level Councils required support by two per cent of voters in the unit they compete in, divided by the number of Councillors' mandates available - but not less than 50 persons. Independent Mayoral candidates required support by five per cent of voters in the unit - but not less than 150 and not more than 10,000.<sup>50</sup> According to Congress' interlocutors<sup>51</sup> it was impossible to collect 10,000 signatures within three weeks. As a consequence, some candidates got around the problem by running under the umbrella of a registered political party. Another concern is related to the starting date of the electoral campaign. Parties and blocs registered their lists at DEC's and could start campaigning immediately from 23 April 2015. By contrast, independent candidates could only start to collect supporting signatures on that very day. According to Congress' interlocutors, this affected the equality of campaign opportunities in a negative manner.<sup>52</sup>

Contrary to the overall positive assessment of the work of the Central Election Commission (CEC), some shadow was cast on its performance by the fact that the Commission amended the procedures for candidate list registration after the start of the nomination period. In particular, the CEC changed the language of the documents submitted for registration within two weeks in April 2015.<sup>53</sup> In addition, some contestants reported cases of DEC's requesting supporting documents not required by law. The lists were eventually registered but only after clarification from the CEC. Contestants flagged to the Congress' delegation that this had wasted their resources and also delayed their campaigns.<sup>54</sup>

Concerning supporting signatures for independent candidates, a voter can only support one candidate which is an unnecessary restriction challenging political pluralism. Moreover, changes within contestants' lists can be made up to seven days before Election Day, creating potential confusion among voters and difficulties to make an informed choice.

### 3.6. Observers

Observing elections plays an important role in supporting the development and consolidation of democracy in the country. According to the Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova, any electoral contestant may ask the District Electoral Council to accredit observers (one observer per polling station) to monitor the elections. Authorised representatives of candidates may also be accredited as observers.<sup>55</sup>

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47 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015.

48 50 women were elected as mayors in 2003 out of a total of some 600, and in 2011 166 out of 898 mayors were women according to CG(22)10, 13 March 2012, Local and regional democracy in the Republic of Moldova. Monitoring Committee. [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1919577&Site=Congress#P308\\_39889](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1919577&Site=Congress#P308_39889)

49 Statement by Amy KOOPMANSCHAP, Head of the Delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Presentation of the Preliminary Findings and Conclusions further to the observation of local elections held in the Republic of Moldova on 14 June 2015

50 Electoral Code, Article 127, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

51 According to the Human Rights activist and candidate for the Mayoral race in Chisinau Oleg BREGA the Congress' delegation met in Chisinau in June 2015

52 It is also at odds with paragraph 7.6 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and international good practice according to the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.23. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

53 According to the CEC decision of 17 April 2015, candidates' lists had to be submitted for registration in the State and Russian languages; there was no language requirement for independent candidates. On 27 April, the CEC amended its decision, stipulating that the personal data in candidates' lists should be submitted in the State language and in both languages for independent candidates, according to the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.23. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

54 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

55 Electoral Code, Article 63, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

Upon request, the Central Electoral Commission accredits the representatives of international organisations, foreign governments and international non-governmental organisations as election observers, as well as their interpreters. These observers have the right to monitor the electoral processes in all polling stations on the territory of the entire country. Observers accredited by District Electoral Councils have that right only on the territory of that district.

According to the CEC, a total of 2,315 local observers from 14 NGOs<sup>56</sup> and 139 foreign observers from 25 institutions<sup>57</sup> were accredited for the June 2015 local elections. The accreditation documents, both for domestic and international observers, were issued by the CEC on time and without any problem.

Over the years, the Moldovan civil society has been actively involved in the monitoring of electoral processes. “Promo-LEX” deployed hundreds of short-term observers in Precincts throughout the country on Election Day. In total, some 2,000 observers from “Promo-LEX” were accredited by CEC,<sup>58</sup> who were involved in a large-scale observation process including long- and short-term observation and monitoring of the electoral campaign.

In addition, guidelines for observers were issued by the CEC in June 2015.<sup>59</sup> It contained a brief description of the rules related to the organisation of the electoral processes including information on the status, rights, and obligations of election observers.

## 4. Campaign and media environment

### 4.1. Financing

The finances of political parties and campaign financing are regulated by the Election Code, the Laws on Political Parties, on Administrative Offences, on the Court of Accounts and the Criminal Code. Following public consultations initiated in 2013, on 9 April 2015, legal amendments to six laws pertaining to campaign finance were adopted. The late amendments affected the campaign as this did not provide stakeholders with sufficient time to prepare for their implementation.<sup>60</sup>

The amendments criminalised campaign finance irregularities and addressed some previous recommendations by the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission including enhancing oversight, introducing more comprehensive reporting requirements and stipulating criteria for spending limits. However, the regulatory system and its current implementation are not sufficient to ensure transparency, integrity and accountability of campaign finances and did not enjoy public confidence.<sup>61</sup>

According to the Electoral Code, each election contestant shall open a bank account with the inscription “Electoral Fund” and shall process via this account his/her own financial means and those received from domestic individuals or legal entities, in order to finance the election campaign.<sup>62</sup> Candidates can also receive interest-free loans from the State.

The total amount of money donated by each citizen of Moldova to a political party should not exceed 200 average monthly salaries per year. The total amount of money donated by a legal entity should not exceed 400 average monthly salaries.<sup>63</sup> The individual cap is 900,000 Moldovan Lei (MDL) and the legal entity cap is MDL 1,800,000.<sup>64</sup>

56 <http://www.cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1522&rid=12733&l=ro>

57 <http://www.cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1522&rid=12734&l=ro>

58 <http://www.cec.md/files/files/Alegeri%20locale%202015/Observatori/nationali/PROMO-LEX.pdf>

59 [http://www.cec.md/files/files/ghidobservatoreng\\_8465715.pdf](http://www.cec.md/files/files/ghidobservatoreng_8465715.pdf)

60 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015.  
61 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.10 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

62 Electoral Code, Article 37, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

63 According to the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, the average monthly salary was 4,172 Lei in 2014, approximately €190.

64 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.9. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

Moldovan law restricts campaign contributions from foreign, state and public sources as well as from non-profit and charitable organisations, trade unions and anonymous donors.

The Central Election Commission is responsible for overseeing the financing of the electoral campaign. All candidates contesting in the local elections were obliged to submit bi-weekly financial reports to the CEC which included data on the income and expenses and their sources.<sup>65, 66</sup> The CEC is required to verify the accuracy and compliance of this data and may impose sanctions (warnings, fines, confiscation of funds, suspension of public funding and deregistration). However, the legislation does not stipulate an exhaustive list of possible breaches and provides the CEC with discretionary powers to sanction. Most importantly, the CEC lacks sufficient human and material resources to efficiently monitor campaign financing.<sup>67</sup>

In meetings with the Congress' delegation,<sup>68</sup> some candidates qualified the current campaign finance rules as burdensome.<sup>69</sup> Some contestants did not even comply with the time framework to submit their reports, but only warnings have been taken as sanctions.<sup>70</sup> However, regarding the financial statements of the election candidates, "Promo-LEX" found that compared to the Parliamentary Elections of November 2014, the non-reported expenses were lower for the local elections' campaign in 2015.<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.2. The campaign

During meetings with different interlocutors, the Congress delegation received positive echoes with regard to free access of the contestants to the media and possibilities for voters to freely express their will at the ballot box. In general, freedoms of expression, association, and assembly were respected through the campaign and candidates were able to campaign freely in the State and Russian languages.

Mostly, the candidates engaged in traditional campaigning including meetings with voters, electoral marches (car, pedestrian, cycling), canvassing, outdoor and media advertising, organisation of sports' activities, electoral concerts etc.<sup>72</sup> Some contestants organised also dancing parties, entertainment for children, free legal support and health care.<sup>73</sup> Social media and internet were used by some Mayoral candidates, particularly in Chisinau and Balti. Campaign materials remained visible on the internet and social media also during the silence period, which is not regulated by law.<sup>74</sup>

According to "Promo-LEX", some irregularities occurred during the campaign and the observers identified some 60 cases of misuse of administrative resources (cf. use of government means of transport, exploitation of public positions) which is by 19 cases more compared to the 2011 elections.<sup>75</sup> These reports included also the use electoral presents by candidates.<sup>76</sup>

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65 Electoral Code, Article 37, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

66 In total, the contestants in the 2015 local elections declared MLD 73 million of incomes and expenditure. The highest incomes and expenditures were declared by the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), *Partidul Nostru* (PN/Our Party), the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) and the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM). Independent candidates were to report to the District Electoral Commissions which noted that most candidates either did not submit financial reports or declared no transactions.

67 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.10 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

68 According to some candidates for the Mayor of Chisinau the Congress' delegation met in Chisinau in June 2015

69 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.10 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

70 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015

71 Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015 , REPORT No 3, [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1434303854.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1434303854.pdf)

72 Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015 , REPORT No 3, [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1434303854.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1434303854.pdf)

73 Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015 , REPORT No 3, [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1434303854.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1434303854.pdf)

74 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , p.10 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

75 Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015 , REPORT No 3, [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1434303854.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1434303854.pdf)

Cases of misuse of administrative resources and misuse of public premises have been reported. A few local authorities did not always comply with the Election Code and the instruction by the Central Election Commission to provide designated premises for public meetings and places for posting campaign materials. Since such places were limited, illegal postings occurred and a number of complaints were made. Some other irregularities reported were related to the over-use of incumbency. Mayors are not allowed to keep their position when they are running for re-election and should be temporarily replaced by an interim Mayor. Two Mayoral candidates for Chisinau and one candidate for the Chisinau Municipal Council did not suspend their official duties immediately, as required by law.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, candidates involved in judicial procedures could register and campaign<sup>78</sup> but the different implementation of the legal provisions on candidate immunity raised questions regarding the selective application of the law.<sup>79</sup>

While the main topics included corruption, the economic crisis, local governance and decentralisation, the campaign focused on personalities rather than on political platforms.<sup>80</sup> The outcome of the local elections was also seen as a potential trigger for parliamentary changes, because it could modify the basis of discussions on a new coalition. The possible call for early elections had been brought out by some of the Congress' interlocutors.<sup>81</sup> The resignation of Prime Minister Chiril Gaburici two days before Election Day further fostered speculations about a new governmental coalition.

#### 4.3. The media

The Election Code and the Audio-Visual Code regulate the media during the electoral campaign. In this context, when reporting on elections, the radio broadcasters and print media established by public authorities have the obligation to respect the principles of fairness, responsibility, balance and impartiality in all their programmes.<sup>82</sup>

The media in the Republic of Moldova include 64 television channels (five with nationwide coverage), 57 radio stations, some 400 print publications and numerous online media. Television is the primary source of information, with many outlets operating across the country. Print media is constrained by limited circulation. Internet provides an additional source of political and election information.

According to international observers, the media – in general – offered an extensive coverage of the candidates, providing them with opportunities to address the voters, using a variety of formats including newscasts, information programmes, paid airtime and debates. The public broadcaster granted equitable news coverage but somewhat favoured the ruling parties. However, private televisions largely failed to comply with their legal obligation of impartiality. Unbiased news reporting was hampered by political influence and a concentration of media ownership.

Broadcasters monitored by OSCE/ODIHR, generally fulfilled their obligation to allot the maximum two minutes per day of paid advertisements to each contestant. However, many local broadcasters offered additional paid airtime to political parties.<sup>83</sup> According to "Promo-LEX", the performance of local and regional mass-media was moderate (only 9 newspapers and 4 local and regional TV stations were involved in the campaign coverage of some electoral candidates between 21 May and 10 June 2015).

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76 . In 2011 Promo-Lex identified 99 cases. Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015 , REPORT No 3, [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1434303854.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1434303854.pdf)

77 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

78 Two candidates for the Chisinau Council under prior house arrest were not able to campaign for two weeks, after being registered. A candidate for Orhei Mayor under prior house arrest was released the day after his registration.

79 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

80 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress), <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

81 According to some candidates for the Mayor of Chisinau the Congress' delegation met in Chisinau in June 2015

82 Electoral Code, Article 64, [https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul\\_COD\\_Elect-2014\\_\\_eng\\_07-11-12\\_corect\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cec.md/files/files/blocul_COD_Elect-2014__eng_07-11-12_corect_FINAL.pdf)

83 According to the OSCE/ODIHR Core Team, paid advertising on TV cost from €25 to €400 per minute, according to how much political parties were competing for airtime with commercials.

The Audio-Visual Code was amended in March 2015,<sup>84</sup> with the aim of increasing the transparency in media ownership. Civil society and international organisations expressed significant concern over the concentration of media ownership in briefings with the Congress' delegation.<sup>85</sup> According to them, political influence over the media landscape is exerted by the General Media Group, a dominant corporation associated with the Deputy Chair of the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM).<sup>86</sup>

In addition, the Central Election Commission produced a voter information campaign with thematic spots in the State language and with Russian language subtitles and sign language which was largely broadcasted by the media. The Audio-Visual Co-ordination Council (CCA) oversaw media coverage and its compliance with the law during the electoral campaign. It published three media monitoring reports for the period from 9 May to 6 June 2015. The CCA warned nine television channels and sanctioned five broadcasters for biased coverage. However, the enforcement mechanisms of the CCA remain weak as it lacks effective and timely remedies.<sup>87</sup>

#### 4.4 Participation of women

The participation of women in the electoral process in the Republic of Moldova is equivocal: the vast majority of the lower level electoral commissions are women but only a limited number of them have been candidates and elected as Mayor or first- and second-level Councillor.

On Election Day, in electoral commissions, the Congress' observers visited polling stations mainly managed by women. Nationwide, women represented 74% of the Level 1 District Electoral Commissions.<sup>88</sup> However, the positions with most responsibility within this body were held by men. In Level 2 District Electoral Commissions, women represented 52% of the commissioners but only 29% of Chairpersons and 49% of Vice-Chairpersons were women. The best example of this phenomenon is the fact that only one member of the 9-member Central Electoral Commission, the highest level of electoral administration, was a woman.

The situation is similar when it comes to candidates. Only 22% of candidates for the position of Mayor were women and so were 35% of the candidates to first- and second- Councils. In Chisinau in particular, there were 4 female Mayoral candidates out of 17 registered and one of them, Zinaida Greceanii (Party of the Socialists of the Republic of Moldova) made it to the second round.<sup>89</sup>

Although there is no legal provision to ensure an equal participation of men and women in local election, there was a slight improvement in the past few years. In 2015, most political parties met a self-imposed 30 % quota of women candidates for first- and second- Councils.<sup>90</sup>

Electoral bodies did not provide disaggregated data on the number of elected females but estimations show the number of them has a general tendency to stagnate. Thus women represented 18% of elected Mayors in 2007,<sup>91</sup> 18.5% of them in 2011<sup>92</sup> and 20.6% in 2015.<sup>93</sup> There were discussions on the introduction of a quota but no legal provisions have been adopted so far.

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84 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015

85 According to some representatives of the media the Congress' delegation met in Chisinau in June 2015.

86 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

87 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions. International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June, 2015. OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) , <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

88 Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Moldova, 14 June 2015, OSCE/ODIHR and the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress) <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/164311?download=true>

89 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015.

90 OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 14 and 28 June 2015.

91 OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Interim Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 5 and 19 June 2011

92 OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Local Elections in the Republic of Moldova, 5 and 19 June 2011

93 According to the NGP Promo-LEX <http://www.promolex.md/index.php>



## 5. Election Day

On 14 June 2015, eleven Congress' observation teams were deployed to different regions and visited polling stations in municipalities including Chisinau, Balti, Drochia, Floresti, Dumbravita, Straseni, Orhei, Hincesti, Olanesti and in many other towns and villages. In the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, Congress' observers operated notably in Cimislia, Comrat, Taracha, Copceac and Vulcanesti. All in all, the Congress' observers were present over Election Day in more than 150 voting places throughout the country.<sup>94</sup>

The Congress' observers agreed that – with the exception of some incidents and individual irregularities - voting took place in an overall calm and peaceful atmosphere. The polling stations were generally well-managed by mainly experienced Chairpersons of Precinct Commissions.

For the first time during local elections, the State Automated Information System "Elections" (SAISE) was in use to identify the voters and check against multiple voting. Also the results of the counting were directly transmitted to the Central Election Commission by SAISE. Unlike during the 2014 Parliamentary elections, the system worked well, with only minor exceptions. Voters were welcomed at polling stations by two SAISE operators who were in charge of identifying the ID-card number within the system. This took place, by and large, in a professional manner.

However, the use of supplementary voters' lists was almost systematic throughout the country. This did not mean that voters were added to these lists massively but the system remains problematic because it could allow for last-minute relocation of voters in areas where the race is close (which was suspected in at least one polling station in ATU Gagauzia where Congress' observers were present). Problems with voters' lists occurred also in Gagauzia, where there seemed to be confusion about data on voters' residence. However, in the polling stations visited by the Congress' teams no official complaints were filed.

A large number of voters on supplementary lists were also noted by the Congress' team which visited polling stations in Cocieri, one of the areas controlled by the Central Government of the Republic on the right side of the Dniestr. The situation there was explained by the electoral staff by the poor quality of the main voters' lists provided.

Polling stations were open from 7am to 9pm. In the majority of the places visited by the Congress, commissions were complete before the opening and the teams well prepared and familiar with the initial procedures. This holds true also for the voting process over the day and the general understanding of the procedures by the electoral staff. As for the voters, their understanding of the processes was assessed as satisfying overall, with room for improvement in remote rural areas. In particular, the large number of candidates and political parties running, along with the length of the ballot papers contributed to some confusion.

Also, the arrangement of the polling booths was not always ensuring the secrecy of vote. In addition, the lack of strict secrecy of the vote in numerous polling stations was due to the small size of voting places not suitable for such activities. As a consequence, voting stations were occasionally overcrowded but this situation almost never seriously hampered the process.

Assisted voting – notably within the Roma community – was the most observed irregularity by the Congress' teams on E-Day along with family voting. In addition, international election observers reported cases of multiple voting and attempts to intimidate voters. Some Congress' teams observed sporadic groups of people loitering around in the vicinity of the electoral buildings but this did not create the impression of controlled voting.

Specific efforts were made in some places to provide specific access for the disabled; however, the majority of the polling stations visited by the Congress' teams were not accessible for disabled people.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, mobile box voting was an opportunity used by a limited number of voters per

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<sup>94</sup> The deployment plan of the Congress' delegation can be found in the appendices.

<sup>95</sup> Most of the polling stations have theoretical access for disabled people but - in practical terms - the access is very difficult, many polling stations were located up steep stairs.

polling station,<sup>96</sup> usually not creating any particular procedural problem for the administrative staff. Ballot papers were printed in the State and Russian languages, not creating any problems. A braille system device was prepared to allow blind voters to cast their vote although it was not available systematically.

Partisan observers and observers from domestic non-governmental organisations<sup>97</sup> were systematically present throughout Election Day. According to the observers of "Promo-LEX", many cases of electioneering were noticed on polling day, as well as distribution of gifts, alcoholic beverages, ice-cream and money. "Promo-LEX" reported also violations of the secrecy of the vote and security standards for ballot boxes.<sup>98</sup> Political parties' observers were massively present within the polling stations, sometimes creating an atmosphere of tension related to the presence of a large crowd observing voters.

Also the closing of polling stations and the preparation of the counting were organised in an overall orderly manner. The electoral staff, usually under the precise direction of the Chairperson, followed the counting procedures as required. The number of invalid ballots identified during the counting was not considered as excessive by the Congress' observers.

## 6. turnout and first-round election results

According to the Central Election Commission, the overall voter turnout was 49%, thus the rate of participation in elections has decreased in comparison to the 2011 general local elections (54%).<sup>99</sup> The highest turnout was registered in the Districts of Donduşeni (58.08%), Criuleni (56.59%) and Ocnîţa (56.44%)<sup>100</sup> - the lowest in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (43.08%) and in the Basarabeasca District (43.91%). The voter turnout in Chisinau was 47.54%.

The first round of elections on June 14 was validated as the 25% threshold was passed in all 35 District constituencies. In 457 localities, none of the candidates for Mayor got the necessary 50% of votes for an outright win, leading to run-off elections held on 28 June (which were not observed by the Congress). In Chisinau Municipality none of the 17 candidates received the necessary 50% which resulted in runoff elections between Dorin CHIRTOACA (Liberal-Democratic Party) who got 37,52% and Zinaida GRECEANII (Party of the Socialists), 35.68%.

According to the CEC, out of the some 1,386,180 voters who exercised their right to vote in local elections on 14 June, the majority (51.05% or 707,612 voters) were over 50-years-old, 46.08% were men and 53.92% women.<sup>101</sup>

The Liberal-Democratic Party of Moldova and the Democratic Party of Moldova won most of the seats attributed after the first-round. Independent candidates won 6 seats in second-level District and Municipal Councils and 7.87% of the votes in first-level Councils. Only 67 (7.7%) independent candidates were elected Mayor.<sup>102</sup>

A table including results can be found in the appendices.

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96 Requests for such boxes were to be made one day prior to E-Day without any justifying document, or on Election Day, on presentation of a medical certificate. However, according to the CEC-Chairman ( Congress' briefing in June 2015) only few voters per polling station requested it.

97 Mainly from Promo-LEX.

98 "Promo-LEX", Мониторинг всеобщих местных выборов от 14 (28) июня 2015 доклад день выборов і тур (14 июня 2015 года), <http://www.e-democracy.md/files/elections/local2015/report-promo-lex-elections-2015-e-day-1-ru.pdf>

99 Data provided by the CEC.

100 <http://omg.md/index.php?newsid=9818>

101 CEC: More than half of voters are over 50-years-old // <http://www.trm.md/en/electoral-2015/cec-mai-mult-de-jumatate-dintre-votan-i-au-varsta-de- peste-50-de-ani/>

102 General Local Elections of June 14 and 28, 2015. Unofficial data in English, <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/local/2015/>

## 7. second-round elections held on 28 June 2015

Run-off elections were held in 457 of 898 localities where none of the candidates for the position of Mayor had won an absolute majority of votes. Other elections had to be re-organised because of the 25% threshold of the voting population on 14 June (Ulm, Laloveni District) or cancelled voting (Topola, Cimislia District).

The turnout was lower than for the first round, with an average of 47.7 %. The highest turnout was confirmed in the Șoldănești District (56.86%), the lowest in Călărași District (40.23%).<sup>103</sup> The voter turnout in Chisinau was 48.66 %.

Out of the total number of Mayors elected in the second round, 355 (77.7%) were men and 102 (22.3%) women.<sup>104</sup> Dorin Chirtoaca, the incumbent General Mayor of Chisinau Municipality, was re-elected for a third term with 53.54% of the votes.<sup>105</sup>

The Congress did not observe the second-round elections on 28 June 2015 but takes note of the statement published by the OSCE/ODIHR on 29 June 2015,<sup>106</sup> according to which the administration of Mayoral run-offs enjoyed the trust of most stakeholders despite the decreasing confidence in the electoral process following cases of abuse of temporary voter registration provisions during the first round. An unclear legal framework for runoffs and first round recounts impacted campaign activities and the preparations for the second round. Fundamental freedoms were respected, yet a few violent incidents occurred. The media informed the public on the campaign but generally failed to provide balanced coverage. E-Day was calm and well managed, with some exceptions.<sup>107</sup>

“Promo-LEX” reported many cases of poorly compiled voters’ lists. Most of the procedural breaks observed on 28 June by “Promo-LEX” were related to the lack of secrecy of the vote and to the security of ballot boxes. Among other forms of irregularities, some cases of illegal voting and observer intimidation were registered.<sup>108</sup>

## 8. conclusions

The general local elections held in the Republic of Moldova in June 2015 were technically well prepared, notably at the level of the Central Election Commission, and based on a legal framework which is – by and large – in line with European and international standards for free, fair and democratic elections. With the exception of some incidents and different irregularities, voting on E-Day was calm and orderly. Electoral staff in polling stations operated in a mostly professional manner.

Although their late adoption negatively affected the campaign and despite the need for more transparency and efficient oversight, the legal amendments introduced by the Moldovan authorities in order to better regulate party financing and campaign activities have been recognised by the Congress’ delegation as an important steps forward, in particular against the background of the current economic crisis and the uncertainty over the geo-political future of the country.

This being said, the Congress has identified areas where further progress can be achieved:

*Voters’ lists:* The Congress’ observers acknowledged that the State Automated Information System “Elections” (SAISE), by which voters’ lists were generated and results were processed, functioned better than during the last Parliamentary elections in 2014. However, the legal framework still allows Moldovans living *de facto* abroad to vote in local elections when they are in the country on Election

103 <http://www.beltsynd.ru/2015/06/29/header/obyavleny-predvaritelnye-itogi-vtorogo-tura-vyborov-v-moldove>

104 <http://www.trm.md/en/electorala-2015/cec-100-din-procesele-verbale-din-ara-au-fost-prelucrate/>

105 General Local Elections of June 14 and 28, 2015. inofficial data in English, <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/local/2015/>

106 OSCE/ODIHR limited election observation mission Republic of Moldova - Local Elections, Mayoral Run-Off Contests, 28 June 2015, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/167331?download=true>

107 OSCE/ODIHR limited election observation mission Republic of Moldova - Local Elections, Mayoral Run-Off Contests, 28 June 2015, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/167331?download=true>

108 Monitoring of the General Local Elections of 14 (28) June 2015 , Election day report second round (28 June 2015), [http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc\\_1436511001.pdf](http://www.promolex.md/upload/publications/en/doc_1436511001.pdf)

Day. In addition, there were no legal requirements for the duration of temporary “residence” which is important in the context of allegations of so-called artificial movements of voters from one constituency to another. Therefore, the Congress suggests the above provision to be revised in a way that only the electorate actually living in a specific municipality have voting rights at local level. This would contribute also to the prevention of electoral fraud.

*Independent candidates:* The Congress also proposes to revise regulations for the registration of independent candidates which could be called over-restrictive, in agreement with OSCE/ODIHR. Against the background of the current crisis, the dissatisfaction about the ruling parties and the disillusion of the population regarding the political class as such, independent candidates should be provided with a level playing field in local elections.

*Women’s representation:* The Congress welcomes any efforts to increase women’s participation in the electoral process, as candidates and elected officials but also in decision-making positions within the electoral bodies. In particular, the Congress encourages the Moldovan authorities to further discuss the introduction of legal provisions that would increase the number of female candidates.

*Decentralisation:* The Congress encourages the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to fully implement the National Decentralisation Strategy in order to strengthen local self-government. Modern, decentralised and effective administration is the *sine qua non* of the further democratisation of the country and an important marker of progress related to European integration.

## APPENDIX I

	Mayors	Councils	
		First level	Second level
Number of seats available	898	10,564	1,116
Number of candidates	4,421	63,549	
Percentage of female candidates	22	35	
Number of female elected	185	N/A	
Percentage of female elected	20.6	N/A	

1<sup>st</sup> round:

Voters on regular voter lists	2,806,319
Voter on supplementary voter lists	29,844
Percentage of voters who voted	49.06%
Number of voters who voted	1,392,875

Final results:

Political contestants	Mayor		Councils Level I		Councils Level II	
	Seats	Percentage of votes	Seats	Percentage of votes	Seats	Percentage of votes
Democratic Party of Moldova	286	31.92	2,811	21.85%	258	17.59%
Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova	285	31.81	2,764	22.24%	259	18.28%
Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	77	8.59	1,178	10.96%	138	10.23%
Independent candidates	69	7.70	372	7.87%	6	3.19%
Liberal Party	52	5.80	729	8.18%	92	12.62%
Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	52	5.80	1,293	12.32%	159	16.56%
Partidul Nostru (Our Party)	43	4.80	792	8.19%	135	11.15%
“European People’s Platform of Moldova — Iurie Leanca” Electoral Bloc	27	3.01	513	5.90%	67	7.61%
National Liberal Party	2	0.22	N/A	0.44%	N/A	0.72%
“Ravnopravi	1	0.11	N/A	0.57%	N/A	0.03%

<b>e (Equality)” Movement</b>						
<b>“Casa Noastra — Moldova (Our Home — Moldova)” Party</b>	1	0.11	N/A	0.13%	N/A	0.11%
<b>People’s Party of the Republic of Moldova</b>	1	0.11	N/A	0.59%	N/A	0.62%
<b>“Lista Poporului (People’s List)” Electoral Bloc</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.18%	2	0.21%
<b>Others</b>	N/A		112 seats		N/A	

**APPENDIX II****PROGRAMME 9-15 JUNE 2015****Congress delegation****Members of the Congress:**

Mrs Amy KOOPMANSCHAP, SOC, L, Netherlands (Head of Delegation)  
 Mr Leo AADEL, ILDG/GILD, L, Estonia  
 Mrs Samira ALIYEVA, SOC, L, Azerbaijan  
 Mr Mehmet AYDIN, EPP/CCE-PPE/CCE, R, Turkey  
 Mr Vsevolod BELIKOV, EPP/CCE-PPE/CCE, L, Russian Federation  
 Mrs Line Vennesland FRASER, ECR/CRE, L, Norway (Rapporteur)  
 Mr Gyorgy ILLES, ILDG/GILD, L, Hungary  
 Mrs Sari JANATUINEN, SOC, L, Finland  
 Mr Anthony MIFSUD, PPE-CCE/PPE-CCE, L, Malta  
 Mr Dobrica MILOVANOVIC, PPE-CCE/PPE-CCE, L, Serbia  
 Mr Vitaly OLUYKO, SOC, R, Ukraine  
 Mr Murad QURESHI, SOC, R, United Kingdom  
 Mr Matteo TOSCANI, EPP/CCE-PPE/CCE, R, Italy  
 Mr Emin YERITSYAN, EPP/CCE-PPE/CCE, L, Armenia  
 Mrs Nino ZURABISHVILI, SOC, L, Georgia

**EU Committee of the Regions:**

Mr Arnoldas ABRAMAVICIUS (EPP), Lithuania (Spokesperson)  
 Mr Vytautas KANEVICIUS (ECR), Lithuania  
 Mr Jerry LUNDY (ALDE), Ireland  
 Mr Petr OSVALD (PES), Czech Republic  
 Mr Uno SILBERG (EA), Estonia

**Expert:**

Mrs Aiste LAZAUSKIENE, Congress' Group of Independent Experts, expert on electoral matters

**Congress Secretariat:**

Ms Renate ZIKMUND, Head of Division, Local and Regional Election Observation  
 Ms Martine ROUDOLFF, Assistant, Local and Regional Election Observation  
 Ms Ségolène TAVEL, Assistant, Local and Regional Election Observation

Arrival of the Congress' Delegation in Chisinau: 8 June 2015

**Tuesday, 9 June 2015**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 10:00 – 11:00 | Welcome of the delegation and technical briefing with the Congress' Secretariat<br>Venue: Jazz Hotel  |
| 11.15– 12.30  | Meeting with Ambassadors /representatives of the diplomatic corps and the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Chisinau, Jose Luis HERRERO<br>Venue: Jazz Hotel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•EUD, Ambassador Pirkka TAPIOLA</li> <li>•Bulgaria, Ambassador Petar VÂLOV</li> <li>•France, Ambassador Pascal VAGOGNE</li> <li>•Georgia, Ambassador Merab ANTADZE</li> </ul> |

- Germany, Ambassador Ulrike Maria KNOTZ
- Hungary, Mr. Jenő KUDRJAVCEV
- Italy, Ambassador Enrico NUNZIATA
- Lithuania, Ambassador Rimantas LATAKAS
- Poland, Counsellor
- Romania, Ambassador. Marius LAZURCA
- Sweden, Ambassador Ingrid TERSMAN
- Turkey, Ambassador Erdogan ODABAŞ
- United Kingdom, Ambassador Philip BATSON

Lunch

- 15.30 – 16.30 Meeting with international NGOs, NDI  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- Dafina GERCHEVA, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative
  - Narine SAHAKYAN, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
  - Corneliu IFTODI, UN Women
  - Andrew YOUNG, NDI
- 17.00 – 18.00 Meeting with national associations of local and regional self-government (The Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova/CALM)  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- 17.30 – 18.30 Meeting with Broadcasting Coordination Council  
Venue: CCA
- 18.00 – 19.00 Meeting with a representative of the OSCE Presence in Chisinau, Michael SCANLAN  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- 19.30 Dinner and de-briefing

<b>Wednesday, 10 June 2015</b>
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- 08.30 – 08.50 Morning briefing with the Congress' Secretariat (Jazz Hotel)
- 09:00 – 10.15 Meeting with the OSCE/ODIHR LEOM, Head of Mission, Kimmo KILJUNEN  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- 10.30 – 11.30 Meeting with the Head of Directorate General for Construction and Houses, Mrs BEREJAN  
Venue: Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions, Cosmonautilor 9.

Lunch

- 15.15 – 16.30 Meeting with national NGOs/ domestic election observers  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- Independent Journalism Centre, Alina GRAIJDEANU
  - APEL, Ion BUNDUCHI
  - Centre for Partnership for Development, Alexei BUZU
  - Promo Lex, Pavel POSTICA
  - Coalition for Free and Fair Elections, Nicolae PANFIL



16.45 – 17.30 Meeting with media representatives  
Venue: Jazz Hotel

- Ziarul National newspaper
- Adevarul
- Ziarul de Garda
- Moldova TV, Ludmila BARBA
- Interact portal
- Radio Free Europe

17.30 – 18.15 Meeting with media representatives  
Venue: Jazz Hotel

- Accent TV, Roman MALINOVSKI
- Omega portal

19.30 Dinner and de-briefing

<b>Thursday, 11 June 2015</b>
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08.30 – 08.50 Morning briefing with the Congress' Secretariat (Jazz Hotel)

09.00 - 17.00 Meetings with representatives of political parties running in the local elections  
Venue: Jazz Hotel

09.45 - 10.30 Meeting with Dumitru DIACOV, PD (Democratic Party)

10.00 – 10.45 Meeting (mini-delegation) with the Mayor of Chisinau, Dorin CHIRTOACA  
Venue: Party Headquarters (Nicolae Iorga 15)

10.30 – 11.15 Meeting with Artur RESETNICOV, PCRM

11.00 – 12.30 Meeting (mini-delegation) with the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of the Republic of Moldova, Dr. Iurie CIOCAN  
Venue: CEC

11.15 – 11.45 Meeting with Corina FUSU, Prime Vice-President, Liberal Party  
Venue: Jazz Hotel

12.00 – 12.45 Meeting with Elizaveta MOSCALICIUC, candidate from the Communists reformers party on the list of "Renastere" Party  
Venue: Jazz Hotel

12.45 – 14.00 Lunch break

14.00 – 14.45 Meeting with Zinaida GRECEANII, candidate from PSRM  
Venue: Jazz Hotel

15.00 – 15.45 Meeting with Ilian CASU, candidate from Our Party

15.45 – 16.30 Meeting with Valerii KLIMENCO, candidate from "Ravnopravie"

16.30 – 17.15 Meeting with Vitalia PAVLICENCO, candidate from PNL

19.30 Dinner and de-briefing

<b>Friday, 12 June 2015</b>
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10.00 – 12.00	<p>Targeted Election Observation Training Session for members of the Congress' Election Observation Mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congress Video on "Observing local and regional elections"</li> <li>- Practical experiences by Congress' members</li> <li>- Questions/answers</li> </ul>
 Lunch	
13.00 – 18.00	<p>Deployment of 3 sub-delegations to meet with candidates for Mayor/Councils and NGOs/domestic observers in the regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Meeting in Comrat</b> (4 delegation members) Venue: Altin Palace, Comrat; Lenin 204 E</li> </ul>
14.00 – 14.30	Sari IVAN
14.30 – 15.00	Serghei ANASTASOV
15.00 - 15.30	Serghei STOIANOGLO
15.30 – 16.00	Nicolai DUDOGLO
16.00 – 17.00	Meeting with ODIHR LTOs
17.00 – 17.45	<p>Meeting with local NGOs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO Pilgrim Demo, Mihail SIRKELI</li> <li>• Pro Europa, Ludmila PITIOGLO</li> </ul>
17.45 – 18.30	<p>Meeting with Local Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gagauz Media, Ecaterina JEKOVA</li> <li>• TV Gagauzia, Stepan PIRON</li> <li>• Vesti Gagauzii, Mr. MARINOV</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Meeting in Chisinau</b> (10 delegation members) Venue: Jazz Hotel</li> </ul>
12.00 - 12.30	Sergiu KISELEOV, candidate from the Democratic Party in Balti
13.30 - 14.00	Serafim URECHEAN, PLDM candidate
14.00 – 14.30	Mihail MUCANU, candidate from the Communist Party
15.00 – 15.45 148/1)	Meeting (mini-delegation) with Igor DODON, PSRM (Party Headquarters, Columna
15.30 – 16.00	Renato USATAI, Our Party (Party Headquarters, 117 Bucuresti str)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Meeting in Balti</b> (10 delegation members) Venue: Hotel Lido Lux, str. Decebal 139, Bălți</li> </ul>
14.00-14.30	Vladimir DOROJKO, Partidul Socialist din Moldova
14.30-15.00	Mihail SMOLENKO, Casa noastră-Moldova
15.00-15.30	Lilia GUTUL, Partidul Socialistilor din Republica Moldova
15.30-16.00	Vasile DOBROGEANU, Partidul Liberal
16.30-17.00	Boris MARCOCI, Partidul Liberal Democrat
17.00-17.30	Ruslan BELOUSOV, Partidul Renaștere
18.00-18.30	Vadim VACARCIUC, Partidul Popular European din Moldova - Iurie Leancă
18.30-19.00	Meeting with ODIHR LTOs

<b>Saturday, 13 June 2015</b>
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14.00 – 14.30	Meeting (mini-delegation) with ODIHR
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- 15.00 – 16.00 Meeting (mini-delegation) with Iurie TAP, represented Vlad FILAT, PLDM  
Venue: Party headquarters, 88 Bucuresti str.
- 16.00 – 16.30 Meeting with Oleg BREGA, Party “Democratia acasa”  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- 17.00 – 17.30 Meeting with Oazu NANTOI, candidate from Electoral Bloc PPE  
Venue: Jazz Hotel
- 17.30 – 18.30 Briefing with interpreters and drivers for E-Day at the Jazz Hotel

<b>Sunday, 14 June 2015 ELECTION DAY</b>
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- 07.00 – 07.30 approx. Teams deploy from Chisinau  
23:00 approx. Transfer back to Chisinau  
Late night de-briefing at the Jazz Hotel

<b>Monday, 15 June 2015</b>
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- 09.00 – 9.30 Meeting with ODIHR
- 14:00 Press Conference and presentation of Preliminary Conclusions  
Venue: Summit Events & Conference Center, 49/3 Tighina street, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
Chisinau, MD-2001  
Conference Hall: Summit Red
- Various times **Departure of the Congress Delegation**

## APPENDIX III

## Deployment of teams

Team 1	<b>Chisinau <sup>1</sup> (center and western environs: Durllesti, Codru, Ialoveni etc.)</b>	Amy KOOPMANSCHAP, Head of Delegation Aistè LAZAUSKIENE Renate ZIKMUND  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 2	<b>Chisinau <sup>2</sup> (center and eastern environs: Botanica, Bacioi, Singera, Chetrosu, Anenii Noi, Mereni etc.)</b>	Line FRASER Arnoldas ABRAMAVICIUS Ségolène TAVEL  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 3	<b>Gagauzia <sup>1</sup> (north part, Cimislia, Comrat, Chirsova etc.)</b>	Uno SILBERG Sari JANATUINEN  <i>Interpreter: RU-EN</i>
Team 4	<b>Gagauzia<sup>2</sup> (south part, Ceadir-Lunga, Congaz, Taracha, Copceac, Vulcanesti etc.)</b>	Anthony MIFSUD Mehmet AYDIN  <i>Interpreter: RU-EN</i>
Team 5	<b>Balti, Drochia, Donduseni, Edinet etc.</b>	Murad QURESHI Jerry LUNDY  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 6	<b>Floresti, Soroca, Cunicea, Cotiujenii Mari, Oliscani, Soldanesti, Rezina etc.</b>	Leo AADEL Vitaly OLUYKO  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 7	<b>Dumbravita, Falesti, Glodeni, Riscani, Glodeni, etc.</b>	Gyorgy ILLES Petr OSVALD  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 8	<b>Straseni, Calarasi, Cornesti, Ungheni, Nisporeni, Lozova, etc.</b>	Nino ZURABISHVILI Vytautas KANEVICIUS  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 9	<b>Cricova, Peresecina, Orhei, Cocieri, Criuleni, Vadul, etc.</b>	Martine ROUDOLFF Matteo TOSCANI  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 10	<b>Hincesti, Leova, Cahul, Crihana Veche, Slobozia Mare etc.</b>	Emin YERITSYAN Vsevolod BELIKOV  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>
Team 11	<b>Tighina, Causeni, Tocuz, Talmaz, Olanesti etc.</b>	Samira ALIYEVA Dobrica MILOVANOVIC  <i>Interpreter: MOLD-EN</i>

**APPENDIX IV****Press Release****Moldova's local elections efficiently administered, within context of political turmoil, international observers say**

[15/06/2015 16:30:00] The 14 June local elections in Moldova were efficiently administered and offered the electorate a diverse choice. They were held in a context of political turmoil due to a massive financial scandal and the resignation of the Prime Minister two days before the vote, international observers from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Congress concluded. "The campaign was lively and generally free, though reflected through politically influenced media. It was strongly impacted by the division of political forces and society over the country's future orientation," said Kimmo Kiljunen, Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission. "The elections were well administered despite the fact that the law was changed after the elections were announced." The legal framework generally provides an adequate basis for conducting democratic elections, the observers said. Certain provisions restricting suffrage rights and on campaigning are not in line with OSCE commitments and international standards. 'This concerns, in particular, the situation for independent mayoral candidates, who are required to collect an unreasonably high number of signatures from voters to register in local elections', said Amy Koopmanschap, Head of the delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.