

## 35th SESSION

Report  
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# Information report on the observation of early local elections in seven municipalities in the Republic of Moldova (20 May 2018)

Monitoring Committee

Rapporteur: <sup>1</sup> Gunn Marit HELGESEN, Norway (EPP/CCE, R)

### Summary

Following the invitation by the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova, the Congress deployed an 8-member delegation to assess the early local elections on 20 May 2018 in seven municipalities including the Capital City Chişinău and in Bălţi. On Election Day, three Congress teams visited some 50 polling stations in Chişinău, Bălţi and in three other municipalities.

Technically, the elections were well prepared and administered by an overall experienced electoral staff at the level of the polling stations. The counting observed was efficient and, with the exception of tensions observed by the Congress in some localities outside Chişinău and isolated inconsistencies mainly regarding the sealing of the ballot boxes, the Election Day can be described as orderly, calm and uneventful.

However, the broader context of the campaign environment was characterised by a lack of level playing field for all candidates. In particular, the Congress delegation was informed about cases of misuse of administrative resources, complaints concerning campaign financing violations and the lack of fair access to the media for all the competitors.

Therefore, the Congress' delegation concludes that policies have to be implemented to ensure the fair representation of local populations in local elections, as well as to improve the accuracy of voters' lists and to better regulate the use of video equipment in polling stations.

Furthermore, the decision taken on 19 June 2018 by the Chişinău Court to invalidate the results of the second round of local elections in Chişinău (which was upheld by both the Chişinău Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court) raised questions with regard to the proportionality and transparency of the Courts. The cancellation of the election result of 3 June 2018 has contributed to further uncertainty and frustration among the population and to the already existing lack of trust in the state institutions.

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

## 1. Introduction

1. Following an invitation from the Chairperson of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova, Alina RUSSU, received on 5 April 2018, the Bureau of the Congress decided to deploy an Electoral Assessment Mission of reduced scope, in order to evaluate the early local elections scheduled for 20 May 2018 in seven Municipalities including the Capital City Chişinău and Bălţi. Gunn Marit HELGESEN (Norway, EPP-CCE, R), was appointed Head of Delegation and Rapporteur.

2. The Electoral Assessment Mission was carried out from 17 to 22 May 2018 and comprised eight participants. On Election Day, three Congress teams were deployed to different Municipalities where elections were held and observed voting and counting in some 50 polling stations. The details of the delegation, the final programme and the deployment areas appear in the appendices.

The following report focuses specifically on issues arising from exchanges held with Congress interlocutors in the context of the 20 May 2018 early local elections in the Republic of Moldova and on observations made by members of the delegation on Election Day. The Congress wishes to thank all of those who met with the delegation for their open and constructive dialogue. It also thanks Mrs Eva GUTJAHR, Acting Head of the Council of Europe Office in Chişinău, her team, and all who lent their support in preparing this mission.

## 2. Political context

3. The Republic of Moldova is a Parliamentary Republic with a President as Head of State and a Prime Minister as Head of Government. At the last Parliamentary elections held in November 2014, the Party of the Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM) received 25 seats (+21 compared to previous elections), the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) 23 (-9), the Party of the Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) 21 (-17), the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM) Democrats 19 (+4) and the Liberal Party (PL) 13 (+1). However, the majority in Parliament changed since the 2014 elections, with a significant number of Members of Parliament changing their political affiliation during their term in office.

4. The next Parliamentary elections are scheduled for November 2018 and will be organised according to a new mixed system including 50 Members of Parliament to be elected on party lists and the remaining 51 in individual constituencies.<sup>2</sup> The new electoral system was introduced in 2017 against the Joint Recommendations of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR.<sup>3</sup>

5. Since January 2016, the Government has been led by the Prime Minister Pavel PHILIP (Democratic Party). Igor DODON (Party of Socialists) was elected President of the Republic of Moldova in December 2016. He is the first Moldovan President elected by direct universal suffrage since 1996.

6. According to the Congress Election Observation Report, the last regular local elections organised on 14 June 2015 were generally in line with European standards for free, fair and democratic elections. Congress recommendations included the revision of residence requirements, notably the clarification between domicile and temporary residence, the need to overhaul over-restrictive regulations for the registration of independent candidates and the promotion of women's participation<sup>4</sup>.

7. On 20 May 2018, early local elections were held in five villages (Leuseni, Volovita, Jora de Mijloc, Nemtemi, Pirlita) and in two Municipalities - the Capital City Chişinău and in Bălţi, the second largest city of the country. In two villages, early elections were triggered by the decease of the incumbent Mayor, while in five other places, early elections were organised further to the resignation or dismissal of the Mayor. The Mayors elected further to the 20 May local elections have a term of office of only one year, as the next general local elections are scheduled for June 2019.

<sup>2</sup> [Analysis of domestic NGO Promo-LEX about the new mixed system](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR Joint Opinion on the law for amending and completing certain legislative acts \(Electoral system for the election of Parliament\)](#)

The Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR underline "the lack of consensus on the change towards a mixed electoral system for the election of the parliament and the risk that independent majoritarian candidates may develop links with or be unduly influenced by businesspeople or other actors who follow their own separate interests".

<sup>4</sup> [Congress Report on local elections in 2015](#)

8. In Chişinău, the political context of these early elections was of particular nature. In May 2017, Dorin CHIRTOACA (Liberal Party) was suspended as Mayor of Chişinău and placed under home arrest by a Court order in the context of a criminal prosecution under different charges of abuse of power. A recall referendum was organised in November 2017, which was not valid as the turnout (17.5%) did not reach the minimum threshold of 30%. Meanwhile, his home arrest was lifted but at the time of the visit of the Congress Electoral Assessment Mission, Dorin CHIRTOACA remained under judicial supervision with limited freedom and with on-going Court proceedings. In order to clarify the conditions of suspension of the Mayor of Chişinău and to look into the situation of local elected representatives in the Republic of Moldova more generally, the Congress organised a visit to Chişinău in August 2017 and a fact-finding mission in December 2017.<sup>5 6</sup>

9. In Bălţi, Renato USATÎI (Our Party) had been elected Mayor in the 14 June 2015 local elections with 72.46% of the votes in the first round. He was arrested in October 2015 after he released a phone conversation of former Prime Minister Vlad FILAT.<sup>7</sup> Renato USATII is also accused of murder attempt against a Russian banker in 2012 and the case is still pending at the Prosecutor Office. In October 2016 a district court issued an arrest warrant against him, and he currently resides in Moscow.<sup>8</sup> Renato USATÎI ran the municipality from abroad since then using video conferencing and telecommunication means. He resigned from the position of Mayor of Bălţi before a local referendum was held.<sup>9</sup>

10. In the election campaign for the 20 May 2018 early local elections in Bălţi, the Democrats and Socialists joined forces behind the Socialist candidate Alexandr USATÎI, which is not related to Renato USATII. As a response to this candidature, Our Party put two candidates, namely Nicolai GRIGORISIN as the official party candidate and Elena GRITCO as an independent candidate. Such strategy was explained by Congress' interlocutors as a way to guarantee their participation in the race in case one of the candidates was excluded in the days before Election Day.

11. During the Electoral Assessment Mission, in meetings with interlocutors from several political parties, local elected representatives and with the NGO Promo-LEX, the Congress Delegation heard allegations of pressures being exerted on Mayors and Councillors, but also on Members of Parliament, including criminal investigations, Court proceedings and business influence to make them change their party affiliation and switch to the side of the holders of power. In this context, the suspicion was repeatedly expressed by Congress interlocutors about the involvement of the current President of the Democratic Party.

### 3. Administrative structure at local and regional level

12. The Republic of Moldova has a two-level territorial organisation: 850 villages (communes) and 48 towns constitute the first-level administration (headed by Mayors who are directly elected<sup>10</sup>). 32 Districts (headed by District Presidents who are indirectly elected by the District Councils<sup>11</sup>), the Chişinău Municipality and the Bălţi Municipality constitute the second level of territorial administration. Gagauzia is granted special status.

13. Mayors are elected for four years through the majoritarian system. Members of Local Councils are elected through a proportional system for four years. The number of Local Councillors depends on the size of the population and is determined according to the Law on Local Public Administration.<sup>12</sup> The Local Council of Chişinău includes 51 members and the Local Council of Bălţi 35 members. Local elections are valid if a turnout of at least 25 % of registered voters is reached in the first round. There is no turnout requirement for the second round of local elections.

<sup>5</sup> [Fact-finding mission on the situation of local elected representatives in the Republic of Moldova](#)

<sup>6</sup> Draft report on the recall of mayors/local elected representatives

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-corruption-arrest/moldovan-opposition-leader-arrested-over-wiretapping-idUSKCN0SH21920151023>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-filat-court-idUSKCN0ZD1XM?feedType>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.moldova.org/en/court-issues-international-arrest-warrant-renato-usatii-leader-party-balti-mayor/>; <https://en.crimemoldova.com/news/politics/mayor-of-balti-renato-usatii-resigns-/>; [https://en.publika.md/warrant-arrest-on-mayor-of-balti-town-renato-usatii\\_2629734.html](https://en.publika.md/warrant-arrest-on-mayor-of-balti-town-renato-usatii_2629734.html)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.moldova.org/en/renato-usatii-resigns-position-balti-mayor/>

<sup>10</sup> Art. 119 (1) Electoral Code of Moldova

<sup>11</sup> <http://viitorul.org/files/ineko/2018/MD%20Key%20Features%20of%20Local%20Self-Government%20in%20Moldova%20%281%29.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [Law on Local Public Administration](#)

#### 4. Electoral management and administration bodies

14. Local elections are regulated by the Electoral Code. This Code was first adopted in 1997 and recently amended in 2017, with the introduction of a mixed system for Parliamentary elections.

15. The election administration is based on a four-tiered structure, headed by the Central Election Commission (CEC). The CEC is a permanent body composed of nine members appointed by the Parliament for a five-year term. The current composition of the CEC includes seven men and two women, including Alina RUSSU as President of the CEC. For the early local elections on 20 May 2018, the CEC established seven District Electoral Councils (DECs)<sup>13</sup>, at the level of each Municipality, and 375 Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs) at the level of the polling station. Given the extraordinary nature of the 20 May 2018 local elections, all costs related to the elections were covered from the State budget, upon request from the CEC.

16. The CEC received a total of 13 complaints related to the 20 May elections. Four were about registration, four about financing and two about campaign material. For 8 of them the CEC adopted a formal decision and for five a simple answer. Some appeals contained more than one issue and two complaints were rejected by the Supreme Court.<sup>14</sup>

#### 5. Candidates and voters registration

##### 5.1 Voters registration

17. According to the CEC, a total number of 748.675 voters were included on the voters' lists for the 2018 early local elections, according to their domicile in the State Registry. The largest number of voters was registered in Chişinău (631.625) and in Bălţi (104.412). 20 days before the Election Day all voters' lists were sent to the polling stations for public scrutiny. In total, 752.460 ballot papers were printed, including 474.816 in the State language and 277.644 in Russian language.

18. According to some Congress interlocutors, there was supposedly a large amount of voters registered during the last days before elections. Such situation is made possible by the provision on supplementary voters' lists. In case voters are not included on the voters' lists due to a late change of address or a late registration of their residency, they can still vote with a valid identification or a voting certificate issued at the polling station of their previous residence. In such case, voters are included on the supplementary list of the respective polling station. The issues caused by such legal provision – including potential electoral fraud – were already addressed by previous Congress recommendations.<sup>15</sup>

19. In general, the legal distinction between residence and domicile does not guarantee a genuine link to exist between voters and the place where they cast a ballot at local level. In particular, the possibility for voters residing abroad to be included, at their request, on the voters' lists for local elections is not in line with Congress Recommendation 369 (2015) on Electoral lists and voters residing de facto abroad.

20. Upon arrival in the polling station, all voters are systematically checked and their data entered into the IT system before receiving a ballot paper. The system foresees two laptops per polling station using different Internet connections (landline and mobile) and aims at preventing multiple voting.

##### 5.2 Candidates' registration

21. In total, 31 candidates were registered for the 20 May 2018 early local elections, including 9 women and 22 men. In Chişinău, 11 candidates were running for Mayor and eight in Bălţi. Candidates can be registered by political parties or by self-nomination using support signatures. The minimum age to be a candidate for the position of Mayor is 25, but there is no residency requirement to be a candidate in a Municipality. According to the Electoral Code, candidates which hold high-ranking public offices, including incumbent Mayors, have to resign from their functions after being registered as candidates.

22. In Chişinău, the candidate from the SHOR Party, Reghina APOSTOLOVA, was excluded from the electoral race just three days before Election Day by a decision of the Supreme Court of Justice. She was under charges of illegal financing from foreign sources. Since the decision was made before the ballots were printed, ballots handed out to voters on Election Day did not contain her name.

<sup>13</sup> Composed of 19 men and 40 women.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cec.md/index.php?pag=page&id=2136&l=ro>

<sup>15</sup> [Congress report on local elections in 2015](#)

23. The Congress Delegation heard allegations, from several interlocutors, about pressure exerted on employees of State-run enterprises to support certain candidates, in particular the Chişinău Mayoral candidate Silvia RADU, who ran as an independent, supported by the Democratic Party of Moldova.

24. Interlocutors from the NGO Promo-LEX informed the Congress Delegation also about a decrease in interest to run in local elections. In previous local elections, about 50 candidates ran in the seven localities where early local elections were organised on 20 May 2018. In some Municipalities, only two candidates were competing on 20 May 2018, one candidate allegedly running to maintain the appearance of democratic competition.

## 6. Observers

25. The Central Election Commission accredited 687 national observers from eight institutions and 51 international observers from 17 institutions. The domestic NGO Promo-LEX deployed eight long-term observers and 375 short-term observers including mobile units on the Election Day. It published several reports prior to and after Election Day.<sup>16</sup>

26. According to the Electoral Code, any candidate may ask to accredit one observer per polling station, who should abide by the CEC Guideline for observers.<sup>17</sup>

## 7. Campaign environment

27. The overall atmosphere of the election campaign was described as tensed by Congress interlocutors. The lack of level playing field was highlighted by some candidates, arguing that they were not granted fair access to the media and other resources for campaigning.

28. In particular, there were reports about local authorities impeding candidates to meet with voters in public areas (schools, hospitals, public service companies). Accusation of illegal wiretapping of opposition candidates were also reported to the Congress Delegation. Based on the law according to which State officials are not allowed to support candidates, a video showing the President of the Republic supporting one candidate was brought before Court. The Court did not rule such support as violating the law on the ground that the President gave his support as a private person and not as President.

### 7.1 Media

29. In times of electoral campaigns, the media are regulated under the Electoral Code and the Audio-Visual Code.<sup>18</sup> Television is the main information channel while social media becoming more important in every election. The Audio-visual Coordination Council (CCA) is in charge of overseeing the media campaign. It is monitoring all media activities, receiving and processing complaints and reports biweekly to the Central Election Commission. All media outlets that register for the election campaign have to report on time devoted to the campaign. Public media outlets are obliged to provide balanced, fair and impartial reporting to all candidates and parties. At the public CCA meetings, some TV channels were found not to have respected their reporting obligations.<sup>19</sup>

30. From several interlocutors, the Congress Delegation heard complaints about the lack of a level playing field and unequal access to the media. Interlocutors from different political parties and the civil society expressed concern about the concentration of media ownership through two big blocks - one giving preference to the Democratic Party and the other to the Party of the Socialists. In particular, many TV stations did not organise open debates and not all candidates agreed to participate in such debates. Very few independent media outlets remain, which play a minor role. Social media (mostly Facebook) is very popular in Moldova and was intensively used by candidates for campaign purposes. However, fake content on social media was also highlighted as a growing problem.

31. The Congress Delegation was also informed of several cases where advertisement companies, allegedly under the pressure from the parties in power, refused to put up billboards for opposition candidates. Media representatives from Bălţi also reported journalists being intimidated and opposition TV station having seen its broadcasting licence revoked.

<sup>16</sup> [Reports by domestic NGO Promo-LEX](#)

<sup>17</sup> [CEC Guidelines for observers](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Audio-visual Law](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Public meeting of the CCA](#)

32. The civil society is very active in media monitoring. The organisation “WatchDog” monitored the media during the election campaign and its report underlines issues related to the legal framework and the monitoring of media, as conducted by the CCA. It also emphasises a lack of balanced information by several TV stations.<sup>20</sup> Prior to Election Day, the organisation filed a case to the CCA, on the ground that a number of TV stations violated the law.<sup>21</sup> The CCA indeed found the TV stations to have breached the principles of balanced reporting and pluralism, and issued public warnings as well as fines up to 85,000 lei (about 18,000 Euros).<sup>22 23</sup>

## 7.2 Campaign financing

33. The Electoral Code and several other laws regulate election campaign financing. All candidates are required to open a separate bank account. However, representatives of smaller political parties reported to the Congress Delegation about difficulties in opening an account as some banks refused their applications, supposedly on political grounds.

34. Thanks to recent legal amendments, donations from individuals are limited to 50 average monthly salaries and to 100 average salaries for donations from legal entities. Donations from abroad are also prohibited and such provision triggered the decision from the Supreme Court of Justice to withdraw the candidate support by the SHOR party in Chişinău.

35. The Congress was informed of several cases of misuse of administrative resources, corruption and the use of public funds in the campaign. Moreover, some parties supposedly exceeded the threshold on campaign spending with no consequences. Issues regarding charitable organisations set up by political parties were raised by some of the Congress interlocutors. Since such organisations provide voters with food or clothes, their support could be considered as a form of vote buying.

36. According to the Electoral Code campaign, expenses and funds raised must be reported weekly to the CEC and must also be reflected in the half-yearly report of political parties filed with CEC on 15 July 2018. Maximum threshold for every constituency was determined based on the average salary in 2017 and the number of voters. The threshold for Chişinău was of 18,025,252.63 lei (about 3,867,000 Euros). According to the reports filled to the CEC, no party exceeded the threshold.<sup>24</sup>

37. The CEC examined the financial reports submitted by contestants after each round of the elections and all reports were found to be in compliance with the regulation.<sup>25 26</sup> However, the NGO Promo-LEX estimated that eight contestants failed to declare all expenditures in their reports. Their estimates show 672,489 lei of unreported expenses in the first two weeks of the election campaign and 1,144,229 lei in the two weeks prior to Election Day. The major categories of unreported expenses were street advertising and promotional materials.<sup>27</sup>

## 8. Election Day

38. On Election Day, three Congress teams observed some 50 polling stations in Chişinău, Bălţi and in three other Municipalities. Technically the elections were well prepared and the electoral staff in the polling stations was experienced. The counting observed was very efficient.

39. Most of the polling stations were not accessible for voters with disabilities. Polling stations did however have tactile ballot guides and were prepared to help disabled persons to enter the polling station. Mobile ballot boxes were available upon request from voters, on medical grounds, and home voting was organised smoothly.

40. Voting procedures were generally followed by the members of Precinct Electoral Bureaus, including voters' identification procedures. However, in some polling stations, sealing of ballot boxes was inconsistent, with seals missing or not being appropriately closed.

20 [WatchDog report](#)

21 <https://watchdog.md/2018/05/10/cerem-sanctionarea-televiziunilor-care-au-incalcat-grav-codul-electoral-sesizarea-cca/>

22 <http://www.cca.md/news/edin-public-cca-din-22052018>

23 <http://www.cca.md/news/edin-public-cca-din-08062018>

24 <http://cec.md/index.php?pag=page&id=2124&l=ro>

25 <http://cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1042&rid=22034&l=ro>

26 <http://cec.md/index.php?pag=news&id=1042&rid=22307&l=ro>

27 [https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/RAPORT-nr.2\\_MO-Promo-LEX\\_ALN\\_20.05\\_eng-1.pdf](https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/RAPORT-nr.2_MO-Promo-LEX_ALN_20.05_eng-1.pdf);

<https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ENG-Raport-nr.-3.pdf>

41. The delegation observed an isolated incident related to the use of video equipment inside a polling station. The Electoral Code allows observers to take photos and video footage in polling stations unless jeopardising the secrecy and security of the vote. However, the presence of such equipment was a source of intimidation for some voters, and decision was made by the polling station officials to remove it.

42. The NGO Promo-LEX deployed a substantial number of observers on Election Day, who were met in almost all polling stations visited by the Congress Delegation. Their observation report also states that results are valid in all 7 municipalities and that the majority of deficiencies pertain to the accuracy and completeness of voters' lists.<sup>28</sup>

43. The turnout in the 1<sup>st</sup> round was of 35.75%, which is low and means that 2/3 of voters remained at home on Election Day.<sup>29</sup> Such a low turnout is an indication that the population is losing political interest and lacks trust in state institutions. In an effort to be transparent, the CEC published the turnout figures live on its webpage.

44. In 6 out of 7 Municipalities, new Mayors were elected in the 1<sup>st</sup> round. Four of them are from the Democratic Party and one from the SHOR Party. The new Mayor of Bălți is Nicolai GRIGORIȘIN from Our Party. In Chișinău, a 2<sup>nd</sup> round was organised on 3 June 2018, between Ion CEBAN, the candidate of the Party of the Socialists and Andrei NASTASE, the candidate of the Platform Dignity and Truth (PPDA). Detailed election results for the Municipalities of Chișinău and Bălți appear in the appendices.<sup>30</sup>

## 9. Conclusions

45. Technically speaking, these elections were well-prepared and administered by an overall experienced electoral staff at the level of the polling stations. The counting was efficient and, with the exception of tensions observed by the Congress in some polling stations outside Chișinău and isolated inconsistencies mainly regards the sealing of the ballot boxes, the Election Day can be described as orderly, calm and uneventful.

46. However, the broader context of the campaign environment was characterised by a lack of level playing field for all candidates. In particular, the Congress delegation was informed about cases of misuse of administrative resources, complaints concerning campaign financing violations and the lack of fair access to the media for all the competitors. In the interest of the further consolidation of the electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova, a number of issues should be addressed:

- In order to improve the accuracy of voters' lists and ensure the fair representation of local communities in local elections, further clarifications regarding the distinction between domicile and temporary residence and the right to vote in local elections of voters residing abroad are required. Moreover, provisions related to the supplementary voters' lists should be revised. The late registration of voters should also be investigated and safeguards put in place to avoid manipulation in this respect.
- The absence of residence requirement to run for the position of Mayor could be revised in order to ensure fair and accurate representation of local populations.
- The use of video equipment in polling stations should be better regulated in order to avoid intimidation of voters, notably by political parties' observers.

47. Some of these recommendations were already included in the Congress' Report on the Observation of local elections in the Republic of Moldova (14 June 2015).<sup>31</sup>

48. Already over many months prior to these elections, the Congress received multiple reports of pressure exerted on local elected representatives in the Republic of Moldova. Such pressure is exerted through Court proceedings and threats, particularly to members of the opposition, determining them to change their political affiliation. Such situation has negatively influenced the campaign environment for the 20 May 2018 early local elections.

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28 [Election day report by Promo-LEX](#)

29 [Voter turnout in the 1st round](#)

30 [Election results from CEC](#)

31 <https://rm.coe.int/168071a960>

49. Further to the election of Andrei NASTASE as Mayor of Chişinău, a Chişinău Court invalidated the results of the elections on 19 June 2018. Both candidates in the second round of local elections Andrei NASTASE and Ion CEBAN had called for voters to go out to vote on Election Day on social media, which was considered by the Court as electoral advertising after the end of the permitted campaigning period. The decision was upheld by both the Chişinău Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court on 21 and 25 June 2018.<sup>32</sup> The invalidation of the local elections raises questions with regard to transparency and proportionality of the Courts decision.<sup>33</sup>

50. The general political environment in the Republic of Moldova is characterised by the lack of trust of the population in the state institutions, notably the judiciary, and in the political parties. The low turnout of the 20 May 2018 local elections is a sign of the growing political fatigue of the population and an alarming signal for elected representatives at all levels of government.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.rferl.org/a/moldovan-supreme-court-upholds-decision-Chişinău-mayoral-election-voided-protests/29318960.html>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/congress/-/congress-president-expresses-concern-after-the-invalidity-of-the-elections-in-Chişinău>



## APPENDIX I

## Results of the 20 May 2018 early mayoral elections in the Republic of Moldova

## CHIȘINĂU

<b>2nd round</b>	<b>Turnout: 39%</b>	
Ion CEBAN	<b>Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova</b>	47.43 %
Andrei NASTASE	<b>Platform Dignity and Truth</b>	52.57 %

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 35.43%</b>	
Vasile COSTIUC	Democracy Home	0.23%
<b>Andrei NASTASE</b>	<b>Platform Dignity and Truth</b>	<b>32.12%</b>
Alexandr ROSCO	Our House-Moldova	0.2%
Valeriu MUNTEANU	Liberal Party	3.61%
<b>Ion CEBAN</b>	<b>Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova</b>	<b>40.97%</b>
Victor STRATHEA	Green Party	0.19%
Alexandra CAN	National Liberal Party	0.17%
Maxim BRĂILA	People's Party of the Republic of Moldova	0.15%
Silvia RADU	Independent candidate	17.65%
Alexandru MITU	Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova	0.17%
Constantin CODREANU	Party of National Unity	4.55%
Vasile COSTIUC	Democracy Home	0.23%

## BĂLȚI

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 34.62%</b>	
Arina SPATARU	Platform Dignity and Truth	6.12%
Alexandr USATII	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	19.17%
Pavel VEREJANU	Party of Ilan SHOR	5.76%
Nicolai GRIGORIȘIN	Our Party	61.74%
Sergiu BURLACU	National Unity Party	3.98%
Elena GRIȚCO	Independent candidate	1.2%
Simion GUȚU	Action and Solidarity Party	1.1%
Oleg TOPOLNIȚCHI	Russian-Slavic Party of Moldova	0.93%

## LEUȘENI

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 37%</b>	
Ion DRAGAN	Democratic Party of Moldova	90.79%
Ion BUJEAC	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	9.20%

## NEMȚENI

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 36.87%</b>	
Maria GHIȚU	Democratic Party of Moldova	82.58%
Timofei ȘINDRILĂ	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	17.41%

## JORA DE MIJLOC

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 52.99%</b>	
Lucia TEREŢI	Democratic Party of Moldova	38.05%
Marina TAUBER	Party of Ilan SHOR	61.07%
Serghei MOROZAN	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	0.87%

**VOLOVIȚA**

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 46.89%</b>	
Ghenadie NISTREAN	Democratic Party of Moldova	79.36%
Alexandru CERCHEZ	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova	20.63%

**PÎRLIȚA**

<b>1st round</b>	<b>Turnout: 39.67%</b>	
Stanislav BABUȚAC	Democratic Party of Moldova	85.61%
Galina ANDRIUȚA	<b>Platform Dignity and Truth</b>	14.38%

## APPENDIX II

## FINAL PROGRAMME

<b>Thursday 17 May 2018</b>
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Various times	<b>Arrival of the Congress' Delegation in Chişinău</b>
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<b>Friday 18 May 2018</b>
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08:30 – 9:00	Briefing with <b>Mrs Eva GUTJHR</b> , Acting Head of the Council of Europe Office in Chişinău Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Piano
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with <b>representatives of the Council of Europe Office in Chişinău, relevant Council of Europe member States in Chişinău and other international organisations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• France, Mr. Adrien GRIMAUD, Programme Manager</li> <li>• Austria, Ms. Kirsten SAXINGER, Research Officer</li> <li>• EU Delegation, Ms. Olga BEINAROVICA, Political Officer</li> <li>• NDI, Mr. Andrei STRAH, Senior Political Officer</li> <li>• UNDP, Ms. Tanja HOLLSTEIN, Chief Technical Advisor Elections for UNDP Moldova</li> <li>• <i>OSCE, Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Slovenia and Ireland - excused</i></li> </ul> Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Piano
Coffee break	
10:30 – 11:30	Meeting with <b>Mrs Alina RUSSU</b> , President of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova Venue: Str. Vasile Alecsandri nr. 119, Chişinău
Lunch break	
12:30	Transfer to Bălţi (about 2 hours)
15:00 – 18:45	Meetings with representatives of <b>candidates and political parties running in the local elections in Bălţi</b> Venue: Hotel Lidolux, str. Decebal, 139, Bălţi
15:00 – 15:45	<b>Mr Nicolai GRIGORIŞIN</b> , candidate supported by Our Party and <b>Mrs Elena GRIŢCO</b> , independent candidate, Vice-President of Our Party
Coffee break	
16.30 – 17:15	<b>Ms Arina SPATARU</b> (DA) and <b>Mr Simion GUTU</b> (PAS)
17.15 – 17:45	<b>Mr Sergiu BURLACU</b> (PUN)
18:00	Transfer to Chişinău

### Saturday 19 May 2018

- 09:30 – 11:00 Meetings with representatives of **candidates and political parties running in the local elections in Chişinău:**
- **Mr Andrei NASTASE**, candidate supported by the Platform “Dignity and Truth” (PPDA), the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) and the PLDM
  - **Mr Valeriu MUNTEANU**, candidate supported by the Liberal party
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Guitar
- Coffee break
- 11:15 – 12:45 Continuation of meetings with representatives of **candidates and political parties running in the local elections in Chişinău:**
- **Mr Ion CEBAN**, candidate supported by the Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM)
  - **Mr Alexandr ROSCO**, candidate for the Party “Our Home Moldova”
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Guitar
- Lunch break
- 14:00 – 15:30 Continuation of meetings with representatives of **candidates and political parties running in the local elections in Chişinău:**
- **Ms Reghina APOSTOLOVA**, candidate in Chişinău and **Mr Pavel VEREJANU**, candidate in Bălţi (Shor Party)
- Coffee break
- 15.30 – 16.15 Meeting with representatives of the citizen election observers’ organisation **PROMOLEX**
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Guitar
- 16:30 – 17:15 Meeting with representatives of the **Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova (CALM)**
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Guitar
- 17:30 – 18:00 Briefing with interpreters and drivers for Election Day
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Guitar

### Sunday 20 May 2018 - Election Day

- 06:30 Deployment of the teams to Chişinău, Bălţi and other municipalities where elections are scheduled on 20 May 2018
- 23:00 Late night de-briefing
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău

### Monday 21 May 2018

- Various times **Departure of some members of the Congress Delegation**
- 10:00 Press point with the Head of delegation upon request from the media
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău
- 12:00 – 13:00 Meeting with **Mr Dorin CHIRTOACA, former Mayor of Chişinău**
- Venue: Jazz Hotel Chişinău, Conference Hall Piano

### Tuesday 22 May 2018

- Various times **Departure of the rest of the Congress’ Delegation**

**APPENDIX III****DELEGATION****Congress members**

**Ms Gunn Marit HELGESEN**, Norway (EPP/CCE, R), Head of delegation, Rapporteur  
President of the Chamber of Regions, Country Rapporteur for the Republic of Moldova

**Mr Jos WIENEN**, Netherlands (EPP/CCE, L)

Thematic Spokesperson on observation of local and regional elections

**Ms Lelia HUNZIKER**, Switzerland (SOC, L)

**Ms Rosaleen O'GRADY**, Ireland (ILDG, L)

**Expert**

**Mr Matej GOMBOSI**, Congress' Expert on electoral matters

**Congress Secretariat**

**Ms Renate ZIKMUND**, Head of Division, Local and Regional Election Observation

**Ms Ségolène TAVEL**, Election observation Officer

**Ms Martine ROUDOLFF**, Assistant, Local and Regional Election Observation

**APPENDIX IV****DEPLOYMENT PLAN**

Congress teams	Deployment area	Interpreter and driver
Team 1 Gunn Marit HELGESEN Jos WIENEN Renate ZIKMUND Matej GOMBOSI	Chişinău Jora de Mijloc	Interpreter: Alexandru MELENCIUC Driver: Ion RUSU
Team 2 Lelia HUNZIKER Martine ROUDOLFF	Chişinău (West) Nemteni Leuseni	Interpreter: Alexandrina PLUGARI Driver: Grigore LUNGU
Team 3 Rosaleen O'GRADY Ségolène TAVEL	Bălţi Pirlita	Interpreter: Angela CHISTOL Driver: Serghiu MALANCEA

**APPENDIX V****PRESS RELEASE (21 May 2018)****Congress delegation on the 20 May early local elections in the Republic of Moldova**

Technically well prepared but concerns about misuse of administrative resources, low turnout and lack of trust in state institutions

On 21 May 2018, a delegation from the Congress headed by Regional Chamber President Gunn Marit HELGESEN, Norway (EPP/CCE), concluded its Electoral Assessment Mission regarding the early local elections held in the Republic of Moldova on Sunday. The eight member delegation deployed three observer teams representing seven European countries and visited some 50 polling stations in Chişinău, Bălţi and three other localities outside the capital city.

"Technically speaking, these elections were well-prepared and administered by an overall experienced electoral staff at the level of the polling stations, the counting was efficient and, with the exception of tensions observed by the Congress in some localities outside Chişinău and isolated inconsistencies mainly regards the sealing of the ballot boxes, the Election Day can be described as orderly, calm and uneventful", Gunn-Marit HELGESEN stated.

"However, an Election Day needs to be assessed also in the broader context of the campaign environment. During our meetings prior to the E-Day, the Congress delegation was informed about cases of misuse of administrative resources, complaints concerning campaign financing violations and, overall, the lack of a level playing field and equal access to the media for all the competitors", the Chamber President underlined. "In the interest of the further consolidation of the voters' lists, we consider it also necessary to clarify the regulations with regard to domicile and temporary residence", she added.

"Already over many months prior to these elections, the Congress received reports about pressure brought to bear on local elected representatives in the Republic of Moldova through court proceedings and threats, particularly to members of the opposition, determining them to change sides. Unfortunately, this situation has influenced the campaign environment and it remains to be a matter of concern for us", Helgesen made clear.

"Last not least, probably the most worrying issue is the lack of trust in the state institutions, notably the judiciary, in the parties and, in related to that, the growing political fatigue of the population. The fact that in Chişinău and Bălţi only some 35 percent of the electorate turned out at the polling stations, is an alarming signal for elected representatives at all levels of government", concluded HELGESEN who, in view of the second round of mayoral elections to be held in Chişinău on 3 June, called on all stakeholders "to do their utmost to ensure a fair and transparent competition."

Further to the assessment of the 20 May early local elections, a Congress information report including targeted recommendations will be prepared and presented at the Monitoring Committee and adopted during the 35th Plenary Session in autumn in Strasbourg.