

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 378 (2015)¹ Observation of local elections in the Republic of Moldova (14 June 2015)

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 relating to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the revised charter appended thereto;

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 that 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 geopolitical orientation of the country – voting took place, apart from certain 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 better regulation

of the financing of 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) to generate voters' lists, to identify voters and verify their right to vote in order to prevent multiple voting, and also to process results. 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.

6. In the light of the above, the Congress invites the authorities to overhaul the legal framework, notably to eliminate inconsistencies and close 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 in line with the respective Congress recommendation in the context of its report on electoral lists and voters residing *de facto* abroad;²

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 for all candidates running in local elections;³

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 participation of women at all levels of 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.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 21 October 2015 and adopted by the Congress on 22 October 2015, 3rd Sitting (see Document [CPL/2015\(29\)3FINAL](#), explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Line Skoii Vennesland Fraser, Norway (L, ECR).

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

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