

## **On the Global Elections Day, The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections Recalls Pressing Electoral Issues**

*February 6, 2014*

On the Global Elections Day, marked on the first Thursday of February of every year, the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections calls on Moldovan citizens to show civic spirit and responsibility when exercising their voting rights. At the same time, in light of Moldova's European aspirations, the electoral context of year 2014, and the recurrent gaps in holding campaigns and ensuring an inclusive and transparent legal framework for elections, the Coalition urges Parliament, Government, the Central Election Commission and other institutions with responsibilities in this area to maximize their efforts to guarantee all people their voting rights.

The Coalition pays special attention to the following issues:

- Using the electoral system as a political bargaining chip is inadmissible. The Coalition calls on Parliament to ensure compliance with the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters of the Venice Commission, and refrain from changing the electoral system in 2014, an election year;
- The Coalition urges Parliament not to delay passing the bill on financing political parties and election campaigns, which was produced by a working group coordinated by the CEC. Unlike the initiatives to amend the electoral system, this bill has been through multiple national public consultations, has been vouched by the Venice Commission, takes into account the recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and provides concrete solutions to the existing issues in this area. Lack of political will to ensure transparency of financial resources in the next election campaign will affect the image of the political class and diminish the overall credibility of the electoral process;
- The Coalition deems unjustified the delay in introducing legal mechanisms to ensure a balanced participation and presence of women and men in the political and decision-making process. A simple analysis of the lists of candidates in the last parliamentary elections reveals that the issue of low representation of women was not solved but rather worsened (the proportion of women candidates was 29% in the 2005 parliamentary election, and only 28.1% in the 2010 poll). Coalition members expect the Moldovan political class to show political will to take action, including via legislative means, to increase the chances of promotion and affirmation of women in politics;
- The Coalition calls on all relevant institutions (Parliament, Government, the CEC) to take active measures to eliminate barriers to the participation of people with physical and intellectual disabilities in the political life, and recommends political parties to take into account the specific needs of these people when developing their platforms or plan their election activities. Although they represent about 5% of the population, these people are faced with many difficulties during elections, including being unable to read the ballots (people with visual disabilities), access polling stations (wheelchair users), read and understand the contents of ballots (people with mental disabilities), etc.



- The Coalition demands that Parliament urgently pass the bill amending the Broadcasting Code to ensure transparency of broadcaster ownership and provide the Broadcasting Coordination Council with real powers to control the declared ownership of media and with responsibilities for limiting the concentration of ownership in this field. At the same time, the Coalition calls on media organizations, regardless of their type and ownership, to acknowledge the importance of their role in shaping public opinion and ensure a fair, balanced and impartial reflection of political and election events (during the campaign) in accordance with international best practices and standards of the profession.

The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections calls on citizens to acknowledge the power of their votes and strive to make active use of their electoral rights. The Coalition reaffirms its readiness to participate in monitoring electoral processes in Moldova in the next parliamentary election, and is confident that the concerted efforts of the authorities, civil society, media and citizens will contribute significantly to building an authentic democracy in our country.

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This event is organized by Promo-LEX Association within The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections with the support from East Europe Foundation from financial resources offered by the Swedish Government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark/DANIDA.