



COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

PROMO-LEX ASSOCIATION

FINAL REPORT
Monitoring of the new local elections
of 19 May 2013

Monitoring period: 7 April to 30 June 2013

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Monitoring report on the new local elections of 19 May 2013

CONTENTS:

- I. SUMMARY**
- II. THE PROMO-LEX MONITORING EFFORT**
- III. FINDINGS**
 - A. Public Administration**
 - B. Election Administration**
 - C. Voter Lists**
 - D. The Candidates**
 - E. The Candidates' Finances**
 - F. Local and Regional Media**
 - G. Election Days**
- IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

I. SUMMARY

The monitoring of new local elections was conducted in five Moldovan towns, namely: Chetrosu village in Anenii Noi raion, Manta village in Cahul raion, Olişcani village from Şoldăneşti and Visoca village in Soroca (mayoral election) and the village Mincenii de Jos in Rezina raion (election of the local council).

During the monitoring period, Promo-LEX observers found that local authorities generally observed with the provisions of the electoral law and ensured a level playing field for all candidates. With a few exceptions, local authorities provided sufficient logistical support to electoral bodies.

Electoral bodies were largely formed in the terms established by law and treated the candidates fairly.

Most municipalities did not have a standardized approach to the preparation, management, updating and verification of voter lists. On the other hand, observers did not meet any impediments when checking if voter lists were available for scrutiny.

Although observers noted some cases of electioneering before the official registration of the candidates, during the early stages of the campaign there was limited electoral activism. Three to four weeks into the campaigning period, the campaigns became significantly more active compared with the previous period, and most candidates became actively involved in electoral activities. Promo-LEX noted with concern multiple instances of use of electoral gifts and administrative resources during the campaign.

Promo-LEX remains deeply concerned with the gaps in the laws governing campaign financing, particularly the lack of clarity regarding election funding and the poor reporting of electoral revenues and expenses by the candidates. In this respect, the monitoring effort noted that all the candidates failed to report on time to the electoral bodies about opening a special bank account marked as “election fund” and did not disclose their funds in a publication of regional circulation or to the district electoral councils (DECs) before use. In this context, Promo-LEX noted and welcomed the increasingly active involvement of DECs to curb this negative practice.

Observers noticed the lack of interest of the local and regional media in the electoral campaign, and their focus mainly non publishing political advertisements for the candidates.

The recommendations of the Promo-LEX mission are made in good faith and aim to improve the electoral process. They are based on the mission’s findings and largely point to the direction of the required intervention, without suggesting specific solutions.

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II. THE PROMO-LEX MONITORING EFFORT

The monitoring of new local elections of 19 May 2013 is a project carried out by the Promo-LEX Association as part of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections. The Coalition is a voluntary union of nongovernmental organizations that implements projects to improve the electoral process and increase public confidence in this process.

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort was coordinated by a core team of observers, which was in charge of communication and general management of the monitoring effort, coordination of the network of observers, analysis of information and logistical support. The core team operated from the date of announcement of local elections and until the publication of the final report on election observation, thus covering findings from both the pre-election and post-election period.

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort also had five long-term observers (hereinafter LTOs) who monitored the election process in each of the constituencies from all the five regions of Moldova where new local elections were held. All observers reported their findings in a standardized form based on direct observations, meetings with interlocutors and analysis of official documents. On Election Day, LTOs also worked as short-term observers at the polling stations opened in those areas.

In monitoring the elections, Promo-LEX paid special attention to campaign funding in all five towns. The monitoring methodology for campaign financing and financial reporting forms used by the Promo-LEX were developed within the project “Strengthening Civic Monitoring of Political Parties’ and Electoral Candidates’ Finances”, implemented with the financial support of the East European Foundation, provided by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

III. FINDINGS

A. Public Administration

Establishing electoral posting sites and venues for election rallies

In accordance with Article 47 p.6 of the Election Code, government authorities and public bodies may provide candidates with public goods or favors strictly on a contract basis, while observing a level playing field for all candidates. However, p.7 of the same article states that local authorities are required, within 3 days of the start of the election period, to establish and mark a minimum of sites for electoral posting, and immediately publicize their respective decisions.

The Promo-LEX observers found that electoral posting sites were allocated in all five towns. However, in most localities, the sizes of the provided posting boards were too small for the number of candidates (ranging between 6 and 9). On the other hand, not all candidates were quick to use these spaces.

Moreover, Promo-LEX reported multiple cases where candidates organized various widely attended activities in sites/premises established by the local authorities in absence of signed contracts to that effect or without having paid the rent for these sites. Most municipalities did not establish fees for the use of premises/public places for electoral purposes. At the same time, municipalities did observe the law in the sense that all candidates were treated equally when asking for premises for their rallies.

Presentation of candidates for level 1 election councils

According to Article 27 p.3 of the Election Code and to the election calendar approved by the CEC, by 2 April, local councils were to nominate candidates for district election councils. The local councils did put forth their representatives to create the respective councils, with the exception of the local council of Mincenii de Jos, which did not nominate any candidate as a member of the district election council.

Logistical support for election bodies

According to Article 35 p.6 of the Election Code, local authorities must provide election councils and bureaus with the premises and equipment necessary for the organization and conduct of the election, and tabulation of the results. However, Article 31 p.1 of the Code states that such support may only be granted on request. Promo-LEX observers found that, to the extent of their availability, local authorities provided election bodies with premises for conducting their activities, access to computers, copier, phone/fax, etc.

Verification of completed lists in support of candidates

According to Article 42 p.6 of the Election Code, the local government certifies the lists of signatures in support of independent candidates by applying its stamp. Promo-LEX found no deviation from this rule.

B. Election Administration

Establishing electoral districts and level I district election councils

In accordance with the law, electoral districts were established on 2 April 2013 in all five towns, and the respective election councils were formed by 9 April 2013, in accordance with the election calendar.

Establishing polling stations and precinct electoral bureaus (PEBs)

In three of the five electoral districts, polling stations were established on time (by 13 April 2013). Polling stations no.25 and 26 in electoral district no.15 (Mincenii de Jos, Rezina) and polling station no.22 in electoral district no.13 (Olișcani, Șoldănești) were created on 15 April 2013, later than the deadline set in the calendar.

Relief from office of members of the level 1 district election councils and members of precinct electoral bureaus

On 12 April, the CEC passed decision no.1910 “on relief from their permanent work of members of electoral councils for the duration of conduct of new local elections of 19 May 2013, and employing their staff members”. In accordance with this decision and based on proposals submitted by election councils, the CEC decided to relieve from office one of the members in three level 1 district election councils, which were actually employed, and summoned one (unemployed) person to each of the level 1 district election councils in Chetrosu (Anenii Noi) and Mincenii de Jos (Rezina).

Promo-LEX observers also found that district electoral council no.15 in Mincenii de Jos suspended members in each of the PEBs no.25 and 26 (decision no.1 of 26 April 2013), although those individuals were not employed and had to be summoned for the job.

Changes in the list of members of electoral bodies

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort found that, during the reporting period, there were no significant changes in the composition of election bodies, except the two cases in Manta, when PEBs did not initially include representatives of the Communist Party (Gisca Lidia M. and Gisca Lidia I.) on the grounds that they had not participated in the respective CEC training. However, the cited persons had attended the training and were subsequently included back in the composition of the PEBs.

Registration of candidates for local councilor and mayor

In accordance with Article 41 p.1 of the Election Code, the nomination and registration of candidates for mayor and/or councilor is carried out after the establishment of electoral districts

and district election councils. Promo-LEX found that the timelines set by the CEC in the election calendar were met, and all the candidates were registered between 15 and 22 April 2013.

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort found that two candidates – PCRM candidates for mayor in villages Visoca and Chetrosu – were denied registration under the electoral symbol of the Communist Party, the hammer and sickle against an open book.

Technical equipment of electoral bodies

According to p.31 of the Regulation on the functioning of precinct electoral bureaus, approved by the CEC decision no.396 of 14 December 2006, the premise of the electoral bureau of a polling station shall be equipped with the needed furniture, cabinets, a safe, telephone, and a fire extinguisher.

Promo-LEX observers noted that all PEBs were equipped with the necessary furniture. However, telephones were absent in several PEBs (three PEBs in Chetrosu) or were installed late (in Manta, the district election council got a phone line only on 7 May). Also, Promo-LEX noted that most PEBs did not have safes, with the exception of a PEB in Visoca village. Some PEBs (no.25 and 26 in Mincenii de Jos) could not work in the premises offered by the municipality during the first round of the election because the sites were being repaired.

Visibility of polling stations

According to p.30 of the Regulation on the work of the precinct electoral bureaus, approved by the CEC decision no.396 of 14 December 2006, the buildings in which the PEB office is located must carry an inscription made in the state language as well as locally spoken language: “Election Bureau of Polling Station no. ___ for _____ elections”.

The Promo-LEX found that the visibility of the polling stations was not fully ensured, as required by the CEC Regulation. Thus, during the first round of elections, in most localities, the inscription was posted quite late on the buildings’ facades. In Mincenii de Jos, Rezina, the inscription was placed on the City Hall building, (the PEB operated in the City Hall premises because of repairs at the PEB assigned premises). In Olişcani, Şoldăneşti, the inscription was posted on the electoral information board near the entrance to the City Hall for a long time, announcing that the PEB is in the City Hall building (along with the district election council). In Visoca village, the PEB was in the same building with the district election council, and the door to the building only carried the inscription: “District Election Council no.33/71”.

Receipt of requests and compilation of lists of voters who will vote at location

According to Article 55 p.4 of the Election Code and the election calendar, voters who, for health or other reasons, cannot come to the polling station, may vote at location if they submit a written application in that sense to the PEB.

Promo-LEX observers found that PEBs in all localities observed the respective legal provision. However, the number of applications received by PEBs varied (at least 7 requests were received in Chetrosu in the first round, and 26 in the second round of elections, at least 2 in Visoca, at least 26 in Mincenii de Jos, at least 41 applications were received in Olişcani, and at least 50 in the village of Manta in the first round of elections and only 3 requests in the runoff election). The Promo-LEX LTO in Olişcani found that, in the first round of elections, some candidates took model applications for distribution to voters in the village. Later, the observer noted that the PEB rejected five such applications because they seemed to have been written by the same hand, and, when asked about that, the people said to have authored those applications confessed they did not submit them. Those applications have not been recorded.

Public announcement of the time and place of voting. Dissemination of voting invitations

According to Article 29 p.7 of the Election Code, the district election council assigns numbers to polling stations in the respective electoral districts, and publicizes the information about each polling station, the registered addresses of the precinct electoral bureaus, the address of the polling stations and contact details. At the same time, Article 30d of the Code guarantees citizens the right to information about the date and place of voting.

The monitoring effort found that, of the five towns, only in one (Mincenii de Jos), invitations to vote were disseminated in accordance with the election calendar approved by the CEC (by 8 May). In other localities, invitations were distributed with a delay of one day (villages Chetrosu and Olişcani) to one week (villages Manta and Visoca). In Manta, the PEBs received the printed invitations only on 10 May 2013, and subsequently distributed them.

Submission of applications for accreditation of observers

Article 63 p.1 of the Election Code and the CEC-approved electoral calendar provide that, “at the request of candidates, the district electoral council may accredit an observer to monitor the voting at the polling stations” by 14 May 2013. Candidates’ representatives may also be accredited as observers.

Promo-LEX observers found that district electoral councils registered at least one observer from the candidates.

Passing the decision on the text of the ballot for the election of mayor and councilors, and ballot circulation

According to Articles 48 p.1 and 130 of the Election Code, by 7 May 2013 “the Central Election Commission shall approve the model of local election ballot, and the district electoral councils shall approve the text of the ballot.”

The Promo-LEX found that, in four of the five towns where new local elections were held, DEC’s have adopted decisions approving the text of the ballot for the first election round. In the village of Mincenii de Jos, the decision was taken on May 8, the next day after the deadline. For the second round of voting, decisions approving the text of the ballot were adopted on time.

C. Voter lists

Preparation of voter lists

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort found that not all PEBs had voter lists by 28 April 2013, the deadline set in the electoral calendar. Thus, in Chetrosu, voter lists were presented on 29 April, and in the village of Mincenii de Jos, they were not yet available on 30 April 2013. Only in Olişcani, Şoldăneşti, and Manta, Cahul, the voter lists were prepared on time – by 26 April. The municipality of Manta village submitted updated voter lists to the CEC on 1 March 2013, as municipalities should do every year, and the CEC sent them to the district electoral council for verification for errors, informing the village that it was not necessary to prepare new lists for the election.

Access to voter lists

Promo-LEX found that voters were granted access to voter lists. PEBs informed the citizens about the possibility of verifying the data in the voter rolls, but few voters came to the PEB to verify the information contained in the lists. For this reason, in most localities, it was the PEB members who verified the accuracy of the voter lists, including by visiting voters at home.

Quality of voter lists

Promo-LEX found that, in some localities (Manta, Olişcani and Visoca), there was only one copy of the voter list. In Manta, the list did not have the signature of the local government representative. The voter lists in Chetrosu contained several technical errors in the voters' personal data (*missing 0 at the beginning of the IDNP*).

Voting with ex-Soviet passports

A major concern of the Promo-LEX monitoring effort was the presence in the voter lists of people holding ex-Soviet passports. According to Law no. 92 of 19 April 2013 amending Article 53 of the Election Code, voting based on these identity documents was to be banned. Territorial electoral bodies and the CEC sought to diminish the negative impact of this law and informed the people about the procedures of getting new identity documents. At the same time, the CEC sent a request to State Company Registru to issue free provisional identity cards to voters from five localities. However, on 3 May, the Moldovan Parliament, by Law no.108, amended the Election Code to give back to citizens holding ex-Soviet passports their right to vote with that document.

D. The Candidates

Campaigning activities before the official start of the electoral campaign

According to the electoral law, candidates may start their campaigns only after being officially registered with the electoral bodies. Promo-LEX found a case when the campaigning was launched before its official start date (in Mincenii de Jos, Rezina). Thus, on 14 April 2013, Eleonora Graur, Rezina raion chair and head of the regional organization of the Democratic Party, accompanied by the deputy chair of the raion, the mayor of Rezina, the head of the Education, Youth and Sport division of the raion council, and raion councilor Alexandra Rusu, had a meeting with the residents of the Mincenii de Jos village, where she called on the people to vote for the her party in the upcoming election. Promo-LEX notes that PDM registered as an electoral contestant only on 19 April.

Types of electoral activities

In this campaign, Promo-LEX observers noted a wide variety of campaign activities. The following types of campaigning were reported: election rallies and door-to-door campaigning (especially massively organized by the parties represented in Parliament and/or at the local level), campaign launches and public presentations of mayoral candidates of various political parties, distribution of electoral materials via mail, distribution and display of electoral materials in public places, outdoor advertising such as banners and billboards, advertising in national and regional newspapers, sponsoring and involvement in various social and charity events, funding sanitation, landscaping and repair works of various sites of public use.

Some candidates placed a particular emphasis on attracting voters to political rallies by organizing electoral concerts. The observers also noted that key party leaders, the Prime Minister and Ministers, MPs, representatives of first and second level local authorities from different localities (including other municipalities than those in which elections were held) also came to support their parties' mayoral candidates in election rallies and concerts, and in door-to-door campaigning.

In many cases, during rallies, various electoral promises were made and even some solutions to earlier promises were presented. Candidates also distributed electoral gifts or offered to transport voters to and from the rallies and concerts.

Distribution of electoral gifts / bribing the voters and use of administrative resources

In accordance with Article 38 p.7 of the Election Code, candidates are prohibited from offering voters money, gifts and free goods, including humanitarian aid or other charity.

The Promo-LEX registered multiple instances when candidates provided voters / residents of different localities various goods and services in order to influence their voting options. Although in most cases the goods and services were provided to entire communities and not to individual voters, their value and the extent of the phenomenon raise significant concerns.

Thus, in Visoca village, Soroca, candidates opened playgrounds for children (PCRM), installed a new gate at the entrance to the village cemetery (PDM), donated a carpet to the village church (PLDM), and inaugurated a station for public transport (PPRM).

In Chetrosu, Anenii Noi raion, the PDM candidate provided building materials to renovate the local church, distributed medical kits for the elderly, and repaired the roads in the village.

In Manta village, Cahul raion, the PPRM candidate installed a station for public transport, the PDM candidate restored a monument to WW2 soldiers and the stadium of the gymnasium in Pașcani, the PLDM candidate repaired local roads and offered free ice cream and kvass during a concert organized on the International Children's Day.

In Mincenii de Jos, Rezina, the PLDM candidate repaired the local church and a well and installed a new door at the local medical center. In the same village, the PDM sponsored the installation of street lighting, refurbished several water springs in the village, and restored some portions of the road.

Also, in violation of Article 47 p.6 of the Election Code, some candidates used administrative resources for their campaign purposes. Thus, although the Election Code (Art. 46 p.2) provides that all candidates must have equal opportunities for technical and financial support of the campaign, some candidates for mayor repaired roads (the road in Olișcani, Șoldănești, was repaired by JSC "Drumuri Șoldănești", where Andrian Svecla, the Democratic Party candidate, works as chief mechanic), used educational premises for campaigning purposes (on 3 May 2013, Marin Buzila, director of the local school in Visoca, Soroca, and candidate for mayor on behalf of the Democratic Party, held an electoral meeting with teachers in the school; on 16 May 2013, Valentina Iachimenco, PDM candidate for mayor of Chetrosu, held an electoral meeting with teachers, inside the school in Todirești, during class hours).

Posting campaign materials in unauthorized places and/or without proper signage

The Regulation on posting political ads on electoral boards and panels during the election, approved by CEC decision no. 3338 of 16 July 2010, prohibits placing campaign materials on publicly-owned transport, monuments, buildings, objects and spaces of historical, cultural or architectural value, regardless of ownership, inside the premises of district electoral councils and precinct electoral bureaus or within a range of 50 meters from them, on fences, pillars and other construction facilities, as well as on devices and equipments, regardless of ownership.

At the same time, in accordance with paragraph 6 of Article 64 of the Election Code, each advertising material must contain the name of the candidate, the printing date, circulation and the name of the printing house.

In most localities, Promo-LEX monitors reported election posters and banners of mayoral candidates that lacked the required data on the order date, printing house or circulation, posted both on authorized electoral boards and in prohibited areas (banners stretched between electricity

pillars, posters stuck on the walls of residential houses, electricity pillars, road signs, bridges, gas pipes crossing the villages, and the doors of the local grocery stores). Some mayoral candidates printed posters with their own efforts (the Communist Party candidate in Visoca village, Soroca, and the PAD candidate in Olanesti, Șoldănești, used an office printer), while others used campaigning materials developed by their party for previous elections (e.g. PLDM candidate in Chetrosu, Anenii Noi).

Complaints

Complaints lodged by candidates during the monitoring period referred to:

- district electoral councils' refusal to register the party symbol for the candidates of the Communist Party (Chetrosu and Visoca);
- violation of Art. 64 p.6 of the Election Code of the Republic of Moldova on the dissemination of advertising materials that do not contain information of the date of printing, circulation and the name of the printing house;
- violation of Art. 47 p.7 of the Election Code on the display of campaigning materials in unauthorized places;
- violation of Art. 47 p.6 of the Election Code on the use of administrative resources.

Although, in most cases, the complaints of the candidates who contested the actions or inactions of political opponents or local electoral authorities were not satisfied, the Promo-LEX was pleased to note that, towards the end of the campaign, some DEC's got more actively engaged in examining cases of misuse of public resources, bribery of voters, and others.

E. Monitoring of candidates' finances

Declaration of financial resources in publication of regional circulation and to the district election council before their use

According to Article 38 p.1 letter a) of the Election Code, after the start of the campaign, candidates are required to declare, on a weekly basis, the financial and material means used for the campaign in a publication of regional circulation. The Promo-LEX monitoring effort found that none of the candidates made public in any form, at a local or regional level, the information on the financial and/or other supporting means received and spent during the first round of elections.

Similarly, the candidates failed to report their financial and other means used during the campaign to the district election councils or precinct electoral bureaus after the establishment of electoral bodies, as required by letter b) of the same Article in the Code.

Opening bank accounts marked as "Election fund" and setting caps for election funds

According to Article 38 p.2 of the Election Code, candidates are required to open bank accounts marked "Election Fund". The Promo-LEX found that most candidates campaigned without having such bank accounts. Some candidates opened bank accounts only 3 or 4 weeks into the campaign. At the same time, it should be noted that most candidates did not open bank accounts because, according to them, political parties were the actual electoral contestants and they were to open the accounts to service the campaign. Promo-LEX found that, while this explanation was merely a way for some candidates to avoid opening bank accounts as required by law, it also shows an inconsistency in the electoral legislation in terms of clearly defining the candidates in local elections as namely the individuals that are delegated by parties to run for mayor or local councilor.

Nominating finance officers (treasurers) to the CEC

Article 38 p.3 of the Election Code requires candidates to appoint financial officers (treasurers) to the Central Election Commission. At the same time, candidates who fail to open a bank account marked as “Election Fund” shall so inform the CEC.

On 30 April 2013, the Central Election Commission adopted decision no.1952 on the confirmation of finance officers (treasurers) of the Liberal Democratic Party (Victor Rosca) and Democratic Party (Nina Scutaru) during the campaign for the organization and conduct of new local elections of 19 May 2013. This is the only such decision on the website of the Central Electoral Commission. It seems that the other parties or candidates did not nominate financial officers to the CEC. At the same time, the Promo-LEX did not find any act by which the CEC or DEC's would have warned and/or sanctioned candidates and/or political parties for violating the respective rule.

Submitting financial reports to electoral bodies

Article 38 p.8 of the Election Code requires candidates to submit twice-weekly financial reports to the electoral bodies. Promo-LEX noted that, during the reporting period, some candidates were reluctant to report electoral revenues and expenses, and others submitted reports that were incomplete or contained errors. Some candidates did not realize from the onset what their responsibilities in terms of financial reporting were and let their political parties present financial reports on the activities conducted by and in favor of the candidates themselves, who were registered by the district election councils.

Chetrosu commune, Anenii Noi raion

Promo-LEX found that, in the first two weeks of the campaign, all the electoral candidates in Chetrosu, Anenii Noi, submitted to the district election councils table forms indicating zero revenues and expenditures instead of proper financial reports in the format required by the CEC. However, later, some political parties that nominated candidates for mayor submitted financial reports in the required format.

Leonid Zalevschi, PLDM. PLDM reported, for both rounds of elections, in all areas, revenues of total 29,000 Moldovan lei and expenditures of about 12,880.3 Moldovan lei for their mayoral candidate for the commune Chetrosu, Leonid Zalevschi. All the reported PLDM expenses covered production and printing costs for advertising materials (leaflets and posters). At the same time, Promo-LEX found that, although the candidate conducted multiple campaign rallies and was accompanied and supported in them by regional and national level representatives of the party (*On 24 April, Alexandru Barbarosie, chairman of the party organization in Anenii Noi, and other team members, attended a party rally; on 16 May 2013, a rally was attended by Vlad Filat, PLDM leader, Liliana Palihovici, deputy Speaker of Parliament, health minister Andrei Usatîi and PLDM mayors from other villages in Anenii Noi*), the submitted financial reports did not contain expenses for the organization of these meetings (travel expenses for participants and supporters, and other).

Valentina Iachimenco, PDM, reported revenues and expenses in the amount of approximately 25,670 Moldovan lei. According to the financial reports submitted by the contestee/party, campaign expenses covered advertising costs (printing materials – newspaper ads, banners, invitations, brochures, posters, advertisements for the concert), space rental costs, travel expenses, per diems for observers and volunteers, and banking expenses.

Although the Democratic Party candidate reports contain a variety of types of costs and expenses, Promo-LEX monitors found that they did not present the complete information about the expenditures and revenues of the candidate/party. Promo-LEX found that the Democratic Party

candidate failed to reflect certain expenses in the financial reports, such as the ones for the organization of the concert on 14 May 2013 with the participation of artists Ion Suruceanu and Zinaida Julea (*lease of the scene, artists' fees, costs of sound, volunteers' fees, transportation costs - people were taken to and from the concert by buses, as were other guests and supporters of the Democratic candidate who came from other places. The only expense related to the concert reflected in the candidate's financial reports refers to costs for producing and printing concert posters*).

Oleg Ignat, candidate of the Democratic Action Party (PAD), reported total campaign revenues and expenses of 3,500 lei, all of which were used for advertising. However, Promo-LEX found that the candidate's campaigning materials did not contain information about their circulation, printing, order, etc., in breach of Article 64/1 p.6 of the Election Code. Promo-LEX observers reported at least one case when incurred transportation costs for the campaign were not reflected in the financial report of the candidate (*a rally in support of the candidate on 11 May 2013 was attended by MP and PAD leader Mihai Godea, who traveled by car*).

Ivan Leca, Liberal Party candidate, did not submit any financial reports. At the end of the first round of elections, PL presented a joint financial report to the CEC showing a total of 1,500 lei in revenues and expenses for all localities where the Party nominated mayoral candidates (thus it is impossible to identify the specific revenues and expenditures of the candidate from this electoral district). Moreover, Promo-LEX did not register virtually any campaigning activities on behalf of this candidate.

Ion Alexei, Moldovan Popular Party (PPRM) candidate, did not submit any financial reports. In turn, the PPRM presented a joint financial report for all localities where they nominated mayoral candidates, showing revenues of 10,000 Moldovan lei and expenditures of 6755.95 lei used for printing campaign materials (leaflets, booklets) (it is therefore impossible to identify the specific revenues and expenditures of the candidate in this electoral district).

PCRM candidate Tudor Novac and Renaissance Party candidate Andrei Moiseev did not report any revenues or expenses during the campaign and did not submit any financial reports to the district election council. However Promo-LEX found some expenditures made by or on behalf of the PCRM candidate - announcements/invitations to debates posted and distributed in the village (circulation 2000 copies, printing house Anenii Noi) and unreported transportation costs of Communist MP Iurie Muntean (who came by car on 23 April 2013 to attend a rally in support of the candidate).

Independent candidates Profir Cerenciuc and Anatol Dobîndă conducted virtually no electoral activities, and financial reports submitted by them showed zero revenues and expenses; the reports also failed to follow the format required by the CEC.

Mincenii de Jos commune, Rezina raion

The Promo-LEX found that most of the mayoral candidates in Mincenii de Jos, Rezina, largely avoided submitting financial reports. Four out of 6 candidates presented their first financial reports beyond the set deadline, one candidate sent in his report before time, and only one candidate submitted the report on time. All financial reports were presented in a free form and showed zero revenues and expenditures.

PDM is the only party that reported at the end of the campaign, total campaign revenues and expenses in the amount of 1,600 lei, as seen in the final report submitted by district election council to the CEC. Promo-LEX found that PDM did not reflect in its financial reports all the incurred expenses, including installation of street lighting in the village before elections,

refurbishing water springs, and repairing local roads. Note that all these works were mentioned in the party's electoral leaflets distributed in the village, which were printed without indicating the dates and order of printing, their circulation, the printing house, etc.

Although they submitted financial reports showing no revenues or expenses, **PLDM and the Renaissance Party** conducted quite active and arguably expensive campaigns. The Liberal Democrats sponsored the renovation of the church in Mincenii de Sus village (the amount spent for this was announced by Tatiana Braşoveanu, no. 1 candidate on the PLDM candidates list for the local council, and totals approximately 40,000 lei), renovation of several wells, and installation of new doors at the medical center in Mincenii de Sus.

With regard to the Renaissance Party, Promo-LEX found that their representatives distributed electoral leaflets on the streets of the village and during rallies, which contained no information about the printing house, circulation and other required data.

Manta commune, Cahul raion

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort noticed an active campaign for mayor, especially between the PLDM and PDM candidates. However, the candidates found it hard to observe the financial reporting requirements.

Ion Pascal, PDM candidate, presented three financial reports totaling approx. 17,174.78 Moldovan lei in revenues and expenses. The reported expenditures cover advertising costs, including design and printing of election materials, observers' fees, and sound-related expenses for public events.

The Promo-LEX found that the candidate's financial reports did not include information about the costs of organizing the concert on 15 May 2013 featuring artists Ion Suruceanu and Zinaida Julea (*lease of the scene, artists' fees, costs of sound, volunteers' fees, transportation costs - people were taken to and from the concert by buses, as were other guests and supporters of the Democratic candidate who came from other regions*). Observers also reported many cases when various services provided by the candidate and his party – the refurbishing of the monument to soldiers who perished in the Second World War and of the local stadium – were not reflected in their financial reports.

Violeta Hîncu, PLDM candidate, reported total campaign expenses amounting to approximately 6,739.8 lei, while the specific revenues for this candidate could not be determined, as they were reflected in the PLDM's joint financial reports for the five campaigns, submitted to electoral bodies.

Promo-LEX found that PLDM organized several rallies attended by party representatives of regional and national level (*on 28 April, a rally was attended by MP Ion Butmalai, chairman of the Cahul territorial organization of PLDM, and other members of the regional team, a rally on 10 May was attended by party leader Vlad Filat*). The financial reports did not reflect the expenses for the organization of these meetings (travel expenses for participants, supporters, sound, etc.) Similarly, the PLDM's financial reports did not cover the repairs of the local road or the costs of organizing a concert for children on 30 May 2013, on the occasion of the International Children's Day (*transportation of the Cahul theater troupe to and from the event, actors' fees, costs of the ice cream and kvass, offered for free during the event, etc.*)

Dumitru Neagu, PPRM mayoral candidate, did not submit any financial reports. The party did present a joint financial report for all four localities where they nominated candidates for mayor elections, reporting total revenues of 10,000 lei and 6,755.95 lei in expenses for printing electoral

advertising materials. Thus it is impossible to identify the specific revenues and expenditures of the candidate in this particular electoral district and their correlation with the expense caps set by the CEC.

Similarly, PPRM sponsored the installation of a station for public transport at the entrance to the village of approximately 5,000 lei, as reported by PPRM mayoral candidate from Visoca village, Soroca, where the party installed a similar station.

Dumitru Pascal, independent candidate, presented a financial report in a free form, with zero revenues and 150 lei in expenses for buying A4-size paper.

Angela Lazar, PAD candidate, and PCR candidate Păduraru Constantin actively participated in the campaign (the PAD candidate distributed advertising leaflets in the village, while the PCR candidate focused more on publishing ads in the regional newspaper Cahul Express, and in the party paper Comunistul); however Promo-LEX did not find any information about their financial reports.

Visoca village, Soroca raion

According to Promo-LEX observers, mayoral candidates in Visoca, Soroca, had different approaches towards the obligation to submit financial reports to electoral bodies.

PLDM candidate Aliona Rotaru reported expenses totaling 5,017.8 lei for advertising and print production (leaflets, posters), while the revenues and donations in this region could not be quantified separately (total PLDM electoral revenues in all electoral districts amounted to 29,000 lei).

Promo-LEX found that PLDM/Aliona Rotaru avoided to report transportation expenses for the candidate and her supporters, including PLDM leaders who participated in various rallies in the region (*8 May - two rallies attended by ministers of Health and Agriculture, 9 May – a rally attended by Prime Minister Leanca and MP Alexandru Cimbriciuc*), expenses for organizing a concert featuring singer Anatol Mirzenco (*sound, site rent, artist's fee, etc.*) and costs for the carpet donated to the local church in their financial reports.

Marin Buzila, PDM candidate for mayor, reported revenues and expenses for advertising (banners, invitations, brochures) and per diems for volunteers and observers totaling 8,652.23 lei (according to the final report submitted by the district election council to the CEC).

Promo-LEX found that the financial reports submitted by the PDM candidate for mayor did not reflect expenses for organizing the concert on 14 May 2013 featuring Ion Suruceanu and Zinaida Julea (*lease of the scene, artists' fees, costs of sound, volunteers' fees, transportation costs - people were taken to and from the concert by buses, as were other guests and supporters of the Democratic candidate who came from other places. The only expense related to the concert which was reflected in the candidate's financial reports refers to the cost of producing and posting concert posters*), the cost of electoral gifts offered during the campaign (*installing a new gate at the entrance to the village cemetery*) and the value of administrative resources used by the candidate (using the assembly hall of the school where he is director for holding a rally with the teachers).

PCR candidate Nona Gorceag presented a financial report showing a total of 26,650 lei in revenues and expenses, which exceed the ceiling of 13,048 lei set by the CEC for this election. Of that amount, the Communist Party paid 25,000 lei for a children's playground that was installed and inaugurated in the village by the PCR candidate in the presence of national and regional

level party leaders, during a rally on 15 May. However, the electoral authorities did not take any action, as provided by electoral law, to curb the breach of financial ceilings.

For the first two weeks of the campaign, instead of a financial report, ***Liberal Party candidate Eduard Braniște*** presented a statement to the district electoral council announcing that he hadn't had any revenues and expenses during the reporting period. PL presented a joint financial report to the CEC only at the end of the first round of elections, showing total revenues and expenses of 1,500 lei for all localities where the party nominated candidates for mayor (thus it is impossible to identify the actual revenues and expenditures of the candidate in this electoral district). At the same time, Promo-LEX observers saw virtually no signs of campaign activities on behalf of candidate Eduard Braniște except the renovation of local roads with the support of a representative of JSC "Drumuri Soroca", a fact mentioned by the candidate at a rally with voters on 8 May 2013.

PPRM candidate Viorica Vescu did not submit any financial reports. The party submitted a joint financial report for all four localities where they nominated candidates for mayor elections, showing total revenues of 10,000 lei and 6,755.95 lei in expenses for printing electoral advertising materials. It is therefore impossible to identify the specific revenues and expenditures of the candidate in this particular electoral district and their correlation to the expense cap set by the CEC.

At the same time, PPRM also sponsored the installation of a station for public transport at the entrance to the village of approximately 5,000 lei.

Independent mayoral candidate Grigore Pleșca was not seen campaigning or spending financial resources of any kind for promoting his candidacy in the election.

Olășcani village, Soldănești raion

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort noted that the candidates for mayor almost completely ignored their obligation to provide accurate and timely reports on the financial resources used in the campaign.

PAD candidate Teodor Garabajiu reported total election revenues and expenses of 1,525 lei. Unfortunately, Promo-LEX could not get access to the financial report and could not analyze the candidate's sources of revenues and types of expenditures. However, according to the Promo-LEX observer, the candidate organized rallies attended by PAD chairman Mihai Godea who traveled by car. Similarly, the candidate posted campaigning materials, which had been prepared on a printer, on several bulletin boards in the village.

Socialist Party (PSRM) candidate Victor Barcari presented a financial report of expenses in the amount of 898 lei (transport, communications and other materials), without, however, specifying revenues.

Promo-LEX found that candidate Barcari posted campaigning materials on bulletin boards in public spaces in the village. In addition to that, the candidate organized rallies attended at least once by PSRM leader Igor Dodon (who arrived by car). It is difficult to ascertain whether these transportation costs were reflected in the report.

Democratic Party candidate Andrian Svecla reported revenues from donations totaling 5,600 lei and 5,450.15 lei in expenses. Unfortunately, observers did not have access to the candidate's report to learn how the revenues were collected and what the money was spent on.

Promo-LEX notes that, like in the other villages, in Olişcani, too, PLDM organized a concert featuring Ion Suruceanu and Zinaida Julea; the party also repaired a road in the village and distributed campaigning materials.

PLDM candidate Valentina Ţurcanu reported expenses totaling 4,327.5 lei for advertising and print production (leaflets, posters), while the collected revenues and donations for this village could not be determined separately (total PLDM revenues for all localities amounted to 29,000 lei).

The Promo-LEX monitoring effort found that, to support their candidate, PLDM organized several rallies attended by party leaders of a regional and national level (*the rally on 15 May was attended by PLDM chairman Vlad Filat, the rally on 16 May - by PLDM parliamentarians and regional representatives*), and the PLDM financial reports did not reflect the funds spent for organizing those rallies (travel expenses for participants, supporters and so on).

Five other mayoral candidates did not submit any financial reports, resorting to a verbal statement to the district election council that they did not have any revenues or expenses connected with the campaign.

F. Local and Regional Media

During the campaign, Promo-LEX observers noted a modest involvement of the local and regional media in covering the election. Despite the low level of involvement, the media engaged more actively in reflecting the campaign and the candidates during the runoff election. Also, throughout the campaign, the media was more concerned with the coverage of candidates and paid very little attention to informing voters about the overall electoral process.

G. Election Days

Promo-LEX found that, in most localities where new local elections were held, the voter turnout, both in the first round and in the runoff election, was higher than the turnout in the June 2011 local elections.

First round of voting, 19 May 2013

The Promo-LEX observers found that the Election Day was well organized, and district election councils and precinct electoral bureaus largely observed the due procedures provided by law. However we cannot say the same about the performance of candidates on the day of silence and on Election Day, when they took various actions to influence the voters' decision.

Negative campaigning in the days of silence

According to the Election Code, on the last day before elections and on Election Day all campaigning is prohibited. The presence of authorized campaigning materials closer than 50 m from a polling station is also prohibited.

On 18 May, Promo-LEX observers found deviations from these rules in two of the localities (anonymous posters denigrating PLDM and, respectively, PLDM, had been distributed in Mincenii de Jos, Rezina, and Manta, Cahul).

Campaigning and influencing voters on Election Day

On Election Day, Promo-LEX observers reported at least nine cases that could be construed as campaigning or attempts to influence voters. The methods used by the candidates and their supporters to influence voters included parking cars with party logo stickers near the polling stations, the candidates' stay inside the polling station for longer than it would normally take to vote, corrupting voters, presence of campaign posters near polling stations, etc. Promo-LEX also found at least 6 cases of organized transportation of voters in favor of certain candidates.

Violation of the secret of the vote and voting without proper documents

Promo-LEX observers found at least eight cases of non-secret voting in Olişcani, Şoldăneşti, and Visoca, Soroca. This translated in some voters' announcements of their voting options to those present in the polling station, taking pictures of the voting option, and entering the voting booth by more than one person at a time.

Observers reported at least three cases in which people voted without proper documents (in one case, the voter had an expired ID card, and in two other cases, people voted with residence permits instead of IDs).

Runoff election, 2 June 2013

The Promo-LEX found that the Election Day was well organized, and district election councils and precinct electoral bureaus largely observed the due procedures provided by law. However, during the day of silence, some candidates as well as some politicians who were not in the race conducted activities aimed at influencing the voters' decision.

Thus, Promo-LEX observers reported two cases of electioneering on the day of silence before Election Day (the Antimafie movement distributed posters denigrating the PLDM candidate in Chetrosu, and the PLDM candidate in Manta attended the consecration of a well in the village).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the Promo-LEX mission are made in good faith and aim to improve the electoral process. They are based on the observers' concerns and largely point to the direction of the required intervention, without suggesting specific solutions. Recommendations are addressed to all actors involved in the electoral process, especially to national and local public authorities, election officials, political parties and other potential candidates and contestants, as well as the bodies of law.

1. Changing the legal and regulatory framework of elections should be conducted exclusively outside election campaigns;
2. Electoral bodies, political parties and candidates, local and central government bodies should inform citizens holding old identity documents about the need to change them in time in order to be able to exercise their right to vote in upcoming elections;
3. Minimum standards for the technical and logistical support of the premises of electoral bodies as well as working schedules of these bodies should be set in correlation with the number of voters included in voter lists;
4. District electoral councils and the Central Election Commission should ensure a better visibility of PEBs during the campaign;
5. The terms "electoral candidate" and "electoral contestant" should be legally clarified for the purpose of financial reporting requirements, indicating the exact body the financial

reports are to be presented to and taking into account the specifics of local elections. Respective amendments to the Election Code and CEC Regulations should follow;

6. A deadline should be set, by which candidates are to inform the electoral authorities about opening bank accounts for campaigning or refusing to open them;
7. Electoral authorities should act against the violation of the electoral legislation by candidates who did not open bank accounts marked as “election fund”, but did have campaign expenditures in its absence;
8. The Central Election Commission and district electoral councils should oversee and sanction those who violate the electoral legislation and ignore the candidates’ obligation to observe financial reporting requirements and deadlines;
9. Relevant authorities should act against the violation of electoral rules pertaining to undeclared campaign financing and should demand the sanctioning of candidates who admit such violations;
10. Electoral legislation training for all election officials should be improved, especially in analyzing and making decisions in situations pertaining to the candidates’ failure to present financial reports, or the poor quality of these reports;
11. Political parties and candidates should be trained and informed on financial reporting rules and procedures to avoid situations in future elections when candidates do not present financial reports, or those reports are incomplete or do not meet the CEC standards;
12. Candidates and political parties should be warned against using administrative resources, offering electoral gifts, posting campaigning materials in prohibited places and using materials that do not contain the required data about their circulation, printing house, and so on;
13. The national, regional and local media should get more involved in the active coverage of the electoral process.