

Promo-LEX

Advancing democracy and human rights

OBSERVATION MISSION

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND
REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM
OCTOBER 20, 2024

Report no. 5

**Observation period:
October 21 - October 29, 2024**

Promo-LEX Association

23/13, Mitropolit Petru Movila str.

Chisinau, Moldova

tel./fax: (+373 22) 45 00 24, 44 96 26

info@promolex.md

www.promolex.md

Promo-LEX

Advancing democracy and human rights

DISTRIBUTED FREE OF CHARGE

All rights reserved. The content of this Report may be used and reproduced for non-profit purposes without the preliminary consent of Promo-LEX Association provided that the source of information is acknowledged.



This report is produced as part of the Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum of October 20, 2024, conducted by Promo-LEX Association. The mission is financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the International Organization of La Francophonie, and the Soros Foundation Moldova.

The observation mission is carried out under the auspices of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections.

The responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report lies with the Promo-LEX Association and does not necessarily reflect the positions of the donors. In case of discrepancies between the Romanian text and its translation into another language, the Romanian version of the report shall prevail. age and its translation in another language, the provisions in the Romanian version shall prevail.

CONTENTS

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
II. ELECTORAL BODIES.....	9
III. ELECTORAL CONTESTATIONS AND DISPUTES.....	11
IV. PERFORMANCE OF ELECTORAL COMPETITORS.....	14
V. ELECTION AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN FINANCING.....	18
VI. HATE SPEECH AND INCITEMENT TO DISCRIMINATION.....	21
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	24
ABBREVIATIONS.....	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legal framework. Promo-LEX OM observed two situations of uncertainty regarding the application of electoral legal norms. In the first situation, the mission found that CEC refused to accredit some observers because of the involvement of public associations in active political activities, which is incompatible with the observer status. The Promo-LEX OM considers that the grounds for refusal must be clear and predictable and that the decisions of the electoral bodies rejecting the applications of the electoral subjects must be duly motivated.

There were also uncertainties in the applicability of legal norms in the case of confirmation of representatives of electoral competitors, which resulted in their non-admission to polling stations on election day. Promo-LEX OM believes that the confirmation procedure should be easy and the legislator should intervene to amend the Electoral Code.

Electoral bodies. During the reporting period, CEC held four meetings and adopted 22 decisions. Before the second round, 19 additional observers were accredited. This means that the elections can be monitored by 2084 observers. CEC approved two other messages of public interest and authorized the conduct of an opinion poll.

Promo-LEX observers carried out 355 visits to electoral councils and bureaus and found that in 94% of the cases, electoral bodies were open during working hours. Changes in the composition of polling station electoral boards were also observed between the first and the second round of elections, in at least 57 cases.

Electoral contestations and disputes. Between 18 and 29 October, CEC received 7 contestations related to the constitutional referendum, most of them related to the conducted electoral campaigning. Five contestations were submitted for examination to CEC, and CEC adopted two decisions on two contestations. One contestation on the content of electoral campaign materials during the second round of the presidential elections was submitted to CEC and the electoral body forwarded it to the police for examination.

Between 18-29 October, constituency electoral councils registered 21 contestations, most of them related to the confirmation of representatives of electoral competitors, electoral campaigning and deficiencies in the electoral rolls. Most contestations were rejected or declared inadmissible.

15 election-related disputes were filed and examined in the courts, most of them concerning electoral campaigning and accreditation of observers. The courts dismissed the actions/appeals in 10 cases and in five cases the actions were declared inadmissible.

During the reporting period, the law enforcement bodies continued their efforts to investigate and punish acts of electoral corruption, carrying out searches, seizing funds, and applying custodial measures. In addition, the police also intensified its communication¹ with society in order to inform citizens about the dangers associated with taking or giving electoral bribes. Promo-LEX OM appreciates the efforts of the law enforcement bodies to counter and prevent the phenomenon of voter corruption.

Activity of electoral competitors. Between 23 and 29 October 2024, according to Promo-LEX observers, the two electoral competitors carried out at least 268 promotional activities, of which 57% were carried out for Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) and 43% for Maia Sandu (PAS). The most used forms of electoral campaigning were the distribution of electoral information materials (newspapers, flyers, posters) - 93% of activities, and meetings with voters - 5%.

¹ [Police](#) sent SMS messages to inform society about the risks associated with electoral corruption

Electoral advertising was observed in 872 cases, with printed information materials (leaflets, flyers) being the most used - 28%, followed by street advertising (billboards, panels, tents, etc.) - 23%, and internet advertising - 21%.

During the monitored period, there were at least eight cases of misuse of administrative resources, involving Maia Sandu (PAS), two cases of involvement in electoral campaigning by religious denominations and trade unions and six cases of intimidation or black PR.

Campaign financing for the second round of the presidential elections. For the period 23 - October 27, 2024, the two electoral competitors reported incomes totalling 2,062,560 MDL, of which 5% - from in-kind donations. The highest income was declared by Maia Sandu (PAS) - 95% (1,956,550 lei). The electoral competitors declared expenditures totalling 3,374,198.14 MDL, 58% of which were declared by Maia Sandu (PAS) and 48% by Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM). Most of the declared expenditures were for production and broadcasting of advertising spots and promotional materials.

For both electoral competitors, Promo-LEX OM estimated unreported expenditures of at least 733,416 MDL, the most being estimated for Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) - 90%, in the amount of 656,530 MDL. For electoral competitor Maia Sandu (PAS) expenditures in the amount of 76,886 MDL were estimated as unreported.

Hate speech. In the period 7-24 October, at least 42 cases of hate speech and other forms of intolerance were identified. Of these, 41 cases took place in an electoral context and were viewed more than 2 million times and distributed more than 20 thousand times.

The criteria 'political affiliation', 'opinion' and 'sex/gender' were most often used as a basis for hate speech. Men (26 cases) aged between 35 and 50 (15 cases) used hate speech most often. During this period, hate speech cases took the form of promoting stereotypes, sexist language, homophobic speech, promoting and justifying discrimination, and incitement to violent actions.

INTRODUCTION

Report no. 5 is prepared and presented by the Promo-LEX Observation Mission (OM) for the presidential elections and constitutional referendum of 20 October (3 November) 2024. This report covers the findings of the observation of the electoral period between 21 and 29 October 2024, including the electoral campaign before the second round of elections. The financing of electoral competitors was observed from 23 October to 27 October 2024, electoral contestations and disputes were monitored from 18 to 29 October, while hate speech and incitement to discrimination was monitored from 7 October to 24 October.

Public reports presented by Promo-LEX OM during the course of the mission include findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning both elections: the presidential elections and the constitutional referendum. Promo-LEX OM has planned to submit five interim election observation reports and one Final Report. On election day (including a presidential run-off, if necessary), press releases will be prepared on the conduct of the elections and the results of the rapid vote count.

The objectives of Promo-LEX reports are: to inform the public about trends observed in the electoral process; to notify electoral authorities of the real-time observations on the quality of the election organization and execution; to hold electoral actors accountable; to prevent potential violations of electoral legislation.

The observation methodology applied by Promo-LEX is based on international standards in the field and entails observing the elections both in the long term (election period) and in the short term (election day). Observation reports are drafted by Promo-LEX OM's central team, based on its own findings, and those reported by long-term observers (LTOs) on the activity of all actors involved in organising and conducting the elections: (potential) electoral competitors, referendum participants, public authorities, electoral bodies, political parties, and civil society. LTO findings are reported using thematic forms and stored on the web platform www.data.promolex.md, a secure system with limited access managed by Promo-LEX. Promo-LEX observers collect and analyze information resulting from on-site observations during field visits, interviews and meetings with interlocutors, as well as from consulting official documents. The activity of electoral competitors and referendum participants is also monitored online.

Campaign financing monitoring is an important component of Promo-LEX OM's work. It involves observing electoral competitors from the perspective of financial resources collected and used for campaign activities. In order to assess the transparency and fairness of electoral campaign financing, Promo-LEX will estimate the expenditure incurred by electoral competitors by applying minimum market prices and will compare them with those declared to CEC by the competitors. We admit that there might be some discrepancies between the costs applied by Promo-LEX for estimates and the actual costs of electoral competitors, but it is important that these prices are applied uniformly for all competitors. Promo-LEX OM will also observe and analyse how the Central Electoral Commission will carry out its control and oversight role in the field of political financing.

During the electoral period, 45 LTOs, including two LTOs who will be responsible for monitoring electoral campaigns and election day abroad, will observe electoral procedures. Promo-LEX is monitoring hate speech and discrimination by means of seven monitors.

On election day, Promo-LEX OM will deploy 645 static short-term observers (STOs) to cover polling stations across the country. Their effort will be complemented by 178 STOs visiting the remaining polling stations. The observers will be deployed in 89 mobile teams, with two observers per team. Promo-LEX will observe each polling station set up for voters in the Transnistrian region. Observers will also monitor over 90 polling stations abroad.

The work of observers is managed by the Mission's central team. All Promo-LEX observers and monitors undergo training at seminars organised by the Observation Mission. Observers also sign

and undertake to adhere to the Code of Conduct² for Promo-LEX independent national observer, committing themselves to act in good faith and in a non-partisan manner.

The OM of the presidential elections and the constitutional referendum of 20 October 2024 is a project carried out by Promo-LEX Association as part of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (CALC).

Promo-LEX OM is not a political opponent of the competitors involved in the electoral process, is not an investigative body and does not assume the express obligation to prove the observed findings. However, the observers' reports are accompanied, as far as possible, by photographic and video evidence, which can only be made available to the law enforcement bodies and the Central Electoral Commission, on the basis of appropriate requests, and under no circumstances to the electoral competitors. At the same time, the violations, including the alleged ones, which are included in this report, must be treated by the electoral authorities as notifications and are to be examined according to their competence, in the light of the provisions of Article 88, para. (9) of the Electoral Code.

Promo-LEX Mission manages the web platform www.electoral.monitor.md where anyone can report election-themed activities. Relevant information from the observers' reports is stored on the same platform. Additionally, reports from citizens can be verified by the observers.

Promo-LEX is a public association, which aims to develop democracy in the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, by promoting and protecting human rights, monitoring democratic processes and strengthening civil society. The Association has been organizing election observation missions in the Republic of Moldova since 2009, with the current mission being the 27th. The employees and members of the Association also have international experience, participating in the observation of elections within International Missions in Armenia, Czech Republic, Germany, Georgia, Estonia, Montenegro, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, etc

The international standards referred to in this report are those developed by the UN, the OSCE, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the European Union, and the Council of Europe. At the end of each report, recommendations are formulated for public authorities, electoral bodies, electoral competitors, other stakeholders, aiming to ensure good organization and improvement of electoral process.

This report is developed with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Government of the United Kingdom, the International Organization of La Francophonie, and the Soros Foundation Moldova.

The responsibility for the views expressed in this report belongs to Promo-LEX Association and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of donors. If there are any discrepancies between the text in Romanian language and its translation in another language, the provisions in the Romanian version shall prevail.

² [Code of Conduct](#) for Promo-LEX independent national observer.

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Uncertainties regarding accreditation conditions for observers

According to Article 88 of the Electoral Code, public associations/non-governmental organizations working, according to their statutes or other internal acts, to defend human rights or democratic values may apply for accreditation as observers. The status of observer is incompatible with that of electoral official working within the electoral body, candidate in the elections, member of the initiative group, representative or person of trust of the electoral competitor or referendum participant, and treasurer

According to Article 88 of the Electoral Code, public associations/non-governmental organizations working, according to their statutes or other internal acts, to defend human rights or democratic values may apply for accreditation as observers. The status of observer is incompatible with that of electoral official working within the electoral body, election candidate, member of the initiative group, representative or person of trust of the electoral competitor or referendum participant, and treasurer.

Applications for the accreditation of observers must be submitted at least 7 days before the election day, and in the case of applications for the accreditation of domestic observers at least 5 days before the election day, the electoral body shall take a decision on the accreditation or rejection of the candidature of the person proposed for election observation. If the application is rejected, the electoral body is obliged to inform the applicant of the reasons for its decision. The refusal to accredit observers must be justified and may be challenged in accordance with Chapter XIII of the Electoral Code.

On 18 October, CEC rejected³ the applications of PA 'INIMI GRIJULII' (Caring Hearts) and PA 'SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI' (Heart and Soul of Moldova) for the accreditation of 775 national observers to monitor the elections. CEC justified its solutions by the fact that the public associations are involved in active political actions and have relations with international organisations that threaten the national security of the state and are subject to international sanctions⁴. In this context, CEC considered that the activities of the public associations concerned were incompatible with the status of observers, whose role is to ensure the fairness of the electoral process, including through neutral and impartial activity.

A separate argument concerning the PA 'SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI' (Heart and Soul of Moldova) referred to the fact that the president of the association was standing in the elections on behalf of a political party whose activities are currently restricted on the basis of an enforceable court decision. CEC also argued that the inclusion of such an entity in the electoral process would create conditions for compromising the integrity of this process, which would be detrimental to the public interest in the proper organisation of the elections and contrary to the legitimate aim pursued, including the provisions of item 25, sub-point 1) of the Regulation on the status of observers and the procedure for their accreditation⁵.

It should be mentioned here that the courts upheld the decision of CEC in the case of PA 'SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI' (Heart and Soul of Moldova)⁶. The Court of Appeal found that there are other factual reasons, on which CEC based its decision, but did not mention them in the

³ CEC Decisions no. [3126](#) and [3127](#) on the applications for accreditation of national observers on behalf of the Public Association 'INIMI GRIJULII' and the Public Association 'SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI' for monitoring the republican constitutional referendum and presidential elections of 20 October 2024.

⁴ [Decision](#) (CFSP) 2022/884 of the Council of the EU of 03.06.2022 amending Decision (CFSP) 2014/215 of 31.07.2014

⁵ [Regulation](#) on the status of observers and their accreditation procedure, approved by CEC Decision no. 1195 of 29.08.2023

⁶ [Ruling](#) of SCJ of 25.10.2024

judgment, such as the fact that the president of the PA ‚SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI‘, Andrei Popa, appears in a photo with Vasile Bolea, whose initiative group was refused registration by CEC, and a post made by Andrei Popa on the ‚TikTok‘ platform, where he expresses his opinion and urges voters to vote for a certain option.

At the same time, SCJ in its ruling noted that, *a priori*, the subjects cannot be impartial if, before being accredited as observers by the electoral body, they were engaged in partisan activities and supporting a political party/ a candidate for the office of President of the Republic of Moldova and expressed their disagreement with other electoral subjects.

On another note, looking at the content of these CEC decisions as a whole, Promo-LEX OM found them to be insufficiently reasoned⁷. We draw attention to the fact that, based on the legal nature of the obligations⁸, they arise from a contract, unlawful act and any other act or fact that may produce them under the law. Respectively, the basis for refusal of registration of observers, invoked by CEC on the basis of point 25, sub-point 1 of the Regulation on the status of observers and the procedure for their accreditation seems to be insufficient to justify the failure of potential observers to meet the conditions of impartiality.

In conclusion, we recommend the Parliament and CEC to examine the appropriateness of amending the regulatory framework so that the grounds for refusing accreditation to observers are clear and predictable.

1.2. Confirmation of representatives of electoral competitors

On the election day of 20.10.2024, Promo-LEX OM identified some cases in which the representatives of electoral competitors, showing up at the EBPS from abroad, were not admitted to the electoral process, on the grounds that they were not ‚registered by the CEC‘. Although the electoral competitors submitted the documents for confirmation of representatives on 17 October, the electoral bureaus failed to issue a decision confirming the representatives. These situations were remedied by issuing the decision on the confirmation of the representatives in the EBPSs abroad by ECEC 38, but only at 14.00 on the election day.

Analyzing these cases, Promo-LEX OM finds that electoral officials have difficulties in interpreting the legal norms, as well as the normative acts adopted by CEC in the part related to the confirmation of representatives of electoral competitors. Although CEC also issued a circular providing some answers on this issue⁹, such problems also occurred on election day.

According to point 15 of the CEC Regulation on the status and activity of representatives of electoral competitors¹⁰, for the confirmation of the representative, the subjects concerned¹¹ shall submit to the *appropriate electoral body* a set of documents¹². The term ‚appropriate body‘, within the meaning of this norm, means both the CEC – the electoral body that registered the electoral competitors in the presidential elections, as well as the ECEC and EBPS – the lower-level electoral bodies, since according to art. 69 para. (1) of the Electoral Code, electoral competitors may

⁷ Art. 31 and art. 118 of the Administrative [Code](#) lay down the obligation of the public authority to justify the administrative act adopted

⁸ Art. 776 of the Civil [Code](#)

⁹ [Circular](#) no. 6297 of 16.10.2024 issued by the CEC Chairperson

¹⁰ [Regulation](#) on the status and activity of the representatives of electoral competitors, adopted by CEC Decision no. 1129 of 18.07.2023

¹¹ Political party, electoral bloc, independent candidate, referendum participant

¹²The following documents shall be submitted for the confirmation of the representative: a) the application for the confirmation of the representative, with the mandatory indication of his/her contact details and, where applicable, the power of attorney; b) a copy of the identity document of the person appointed as representative, valid on the date of submission of the application for confirmation; c) a copy of the educational qualification document, in the case of the person appointed as representative to the Central Electoral Commission; d) a declaration on the person's own responsibility regarding the incompatibilities referred to in point 11 of the Regulation.

appoint one representative each to the electoral bodies that registered them, as well as to the lower-level electoral bodies.

At the same time, para. (3) of the same article suggests that the representatives must be confirmed by the electoral body where they are to represent the electoral competitor¹³. This rule seems to put a burden on electoral competitors, who would have to apply to each EBPS where they wish to have representatives on election day.

In this regard, we believe that the legislator should amend the legal norms so as to facilitate the procedure of confirming the representatives of electoral competitors in electoral bodies.

With regard to the deadline for submitting the documents, we will point out that according to point 16 of the same Regulation, the documents for the confirmation of the representative shall be submitted by the concerned subjects¹⁴ after their registration as electoral competitors, but no later than 3 days before the election day. In the case of a second round of elections or repeat voting, the same deadline for the submission of the documents for the confirmation of the representative shall apply. Accordingly, the electoral body has three days from the date of submission of the applications to adopt the decision, as laid down in point 17 of the above-mentioned Regulation.

Also, we will point out that the method of submitting the documents is both the traditional one, on paper, and the electronic one, by e-mail, according to the provisions of the Administrative Code¹⁵, and the content of the above-mentioned circular.

Thus, with the aim of minimizing the cases similar to those described in the first paragraph, but also in order to streamline organizational processes, especially those concerning polling stations abroad, we recommend that actors involved in the electoral process use electronic submission of documents, as this contributes both to the speed of processes, as well as to the traceability of events and, last but not least, to a better environment by reducing paper consumption.

¹³ The representatives of the electoral competitor have the right to participate in all electoral operations, in all meetings of the electoral body that confirmed him/her, including on election day, to represent the interests of the electoral competitor and in other authorities involved in the electoral process.

¹⁴ Political party, electoral bloc, independent candidate, referendum participant

¹⁵ Article 33 of Administrative [Code](#)

II. ELECTORAL BODIES

2.1. Activity of the Central Electoral Commission

Approval of decisions on the organisation and conduct of the second round of the presidential elections. During the observation period, CEC held four meetings and adopted 22 decisions.

Accreditation of observers. During the period under observation CEC accredited 19 additional observers: 13 national observers from the 'Promo-LEX' Association and 6 international observers from the Embassy of Ukraine (1), the Embassy of the United States of America (2) and the European Parliament (3). In total, the second round of the presidential elections could be monitored by 2,084 observers accredited by the CEC (2,068¹⁶) and ECEC(16) until the date of the report. As a reminder, the previously accredited observers can continue their activities on 3 November 2024.

Approval of public interest messages. During the observed period of time, CEC approved two other messages of public interest (information video spots), developed by CEC and PA Community for advocacy and public policies 'Watchdog.md'¹⁷.

Authorization to conduct opinion polls. In the reference period, CEC authorized 'DATE INTELIGENTE' S.R.L. to conduct a public opinion poll during the electoral period of the second round of elections. It should be noted that, also for the second round, no electoral opinion poll on the voters' voting option was requested and authorized to be carried out on the day of the elections at the exit polling stations (exit-poll)¹⁸.

Also during this period, the Promo-LEX OM identified a case of a Russian-language opinion poll carried out without CEC authorization. Thus, the political preferences of voters after the first round of elections and their participation in the second round of elections were collected by a company whose website is registered in Romania¹⁹.

Public information. Promo-LEX OM emphasizes that, also for this period, there were regular difficulties in accessing electoral materials, in particular the notifications on electoral violations, which are published under the heading 'Entry/Exit documents'.

At the same time, the minutes on the centralization of the out-of-country voting results were published under the headings 'Results of the first round of elections' and 'Results of the constitutional republican referendum' later than those of the in-country voting - on 30 October 2024. We reiterate our conviction that ensuring transparency of the whole process is very important, and the electoral authority should ensure correct, complete information in timely and accurate terms to the general public and all subjects of the electoral process.

2.2. Activity of lower-level electoral bodies

Compliance with the work schedule. Between 21 and 29 October 2024, Promo-LEX observers undertook at least 355 visits to electoral bodies (37 CECEs and 318 EBPS). 94% of the visits were carried out during working hours²⁰.

Modificarea componenței birourilor electorale ale secțiilor de votare (BESV). În urma analizei hotărârilor CECE privind modificarea componenței nominale a BESV, constatăm, în total, cel puțin

¹⁶ [Accreditation](#) of national and international observers.

¹⁷ [Messages of public interest](#) approved by CEC.

¹⁸ [Opinion polls authorised](#) by CEC.

¹⁹ [Poll unauthorised](#) by CEC. IP address of the company's website: [Romania](#).

²⁰ The premises were closed during working hours in the case of: ECEC no. 37 for localities on the left bank of the Dniester; ECEC no. 38 for polling stations set up abroad; EBPS no. 1/14; no. 1/72; no. 1/86; no. 1/110; no. 4/13; no. 37/18 and no. 37/22. The electoral bureaus were closed during both visits of the Promo-LEX observer.

57 cases of changes in the composition of EBPS during the period. In most cases the EBPS members were replaced by other members designated from among the persons listed in the Register of Electoral Officials (see Table 1).

Table no. 1

<i>Total no. of members</i>	<i>Local Council</i>	<i>PAS</i>	<i>PSRM</i>	<i>MAE</i>	<i>REO</i>
57	17	6	4	6	24

III. ELECTORAL CONTESTATIONS AND DISPUTES

3.1. Contestations submitted to CEC

In the period 18 - October 29, according to the information available to Promo-LEX OM²¹, 7 contestations were submitted to CEC, referring to the constitutional referendum. The subject of these contestations concerned electoral materials (1 case), electoral campaigning (5 cases) and recounting of votes and invalidation of results for the republican referendum at polling stations abroad (1 case).

As regards these contestations, CEC forwarded 5 contestations in accordance with its respective competence to ECEC and adopted two decisions²², in one of which it applied the sanctions provided for by the Electoral Code, such as deprivation of allowances for a period of 4 months. The other contestations were submitted on election day and were sent to ECEC according to its respective competence. Although contestations lodged on election day must be settled on the same day, there were cases²³ where they were examined the following day.

It should be noted that Promo-LEX OM was unable to get acquainted with all the above-mentioned contestations, as some of them are not published on the CEC website. Similarly, according to the CEC report on the results of the organization and conduct of the constitutional republican referendum, it was mentioned that 20 notifications were submitted to the central electoral authority, but they were not found under the heading 'Incoming/Outgoing documents' on the CEC website, except for some of them.

Apart from the above, we note that the representative of Alexandr Stoianoglo submitted a contestation to CEC regarding the leaflets distributed in support of presidential candidate Maia Sandu. According to the author, the content of these leaflets incites hatred, promotes falsehoods and slanders Alexandr Stoianoglo. CEC forwarded it to the General Police Inspectorate for examination according to its competence.

Also, during the observation period, Alexandr Stoianoglo filed a complaint to the General Prosecutor's Office and the Equality Council, in which he requested the sanctioning of persons who allegedly spread hate speech. Without commenting on the merits of the case, we would like to emphasize that in a democratic state, any acts of discrimination, incitement to hatred or violence, especially those committed through mass media, are condemnable and must be discouraged/punished. In this context, on 25 October, the Equality Council adopted a decision declaring the complaint inadmissible for lack of legal competence to deal with it and forwarded it to the Police Directorate for examination.

3.2. Contestations submitted to ECEC

Between 18 and October 29, 21 contestations were submitted to ECEC. The most were submitted to ECEC no. 1 Chisinau (4 contestations) and ECEC no. 38 Abroad (4 contestations).

The subject of contestations concerned the confirmation of representatives of electoral competitors (4 contestations), electoral campaigning (4 contestations), deficiency in the electoral rolls (3 contestations), misunderstanding in the handing out of ballot papers (2 contestations) and others (8 contestations).

The electoral bodies examined contestations within the legal deadline, which ranged from 0-3 days. An analysis of the contestations shows that most of them were submitted on the day of voting and were examined on the same day (12 contestations). The majority of contestations

²¹ CEC [Decision](#) no. 3147 for the approval of the Central Electoral Commission's Report on the results of organization and conduct of the republican constitutional referendum of 20 October 2024

²² CEC [Decision](#) no. 3128 of 19.10.2024 and CEC [decision](#) no. 3138 of 24.10.2024

²³ ECEC [Decision](#) no. 2 Bălți no. 97 of 21.10.2024

were rejected or declared inadmissible, with only one case of admissibility, concerning the confirmation of PSRM representatives. In this case, ECEC no. 38 found that EBPS 38/79 Dublin, 38/173 Setubal and 38/121 Parma had not examined the documents on the confirmation of the PSRM representatives and ordered their confirmation by decision.

We note that in the process of examining contestations, a case was identified in which a foreign EBPS²⁴ examined a contestation, which was sent by ECEC no. 38 according to its competence. The contestation alleged that the EU flag was present in this polling station, which in the opinion of the author of the contestation is a violation of the legal rules on electoral campaigning. We remind on this occasion that according to art. 97 para. (2) of the Electoral Code, the competence to examine contestations lies with the CEC, ECEC and the Broadcasting Council, and not with the EBPS as wrongly held in this case. Despite this, EBPS adopted a decision declaring the submitted contestation inadmissible.

3.3. Actions brought before the courts

In the period 18-29 October, 15 election-related disputes were filed and examined in the courts. These cases concerned electoral campaigning (3 cases), accreditation of observers (3 cases), use of administrative resources (2 cases), supervision of financing of referendum participants (2 cases), involvement of minors in the electoral campaign (2 cases), electoral advertising (1 case), others (2 cases). The courts examined the disputes within the legal timeframe, which varied between 0-5 days.

The courts dismissed the actions/appeals in 10 cases. In other five cases the courts decided to declare the actions/appeals inadmissible. During this period the administrative courts did not admit any actions/appeals.

Promo-LEX OM notes that in the reporting period the courts were more efficient than in the previous reporting periods, with three cases where disputes were examined on the day actions were filed.

3.4. Activity of law enforcement bodies

On 21 October, NAC announced that it had carried out dozens of searches and applied seizures of about 11 million MDL in cases of illegal financing of a political party, corruption and influence peddling²⁵. In the same press release, NAC informs that 12 people have been arrested in the cases initiated by NAC.

On 22 October, the police announced²⁶ that they had carried out investigations against 400 people for receiving money in exchange for votes.

On October 24, GPI organized a press briefing²⁷, announcing that in the last two months, about 39 million USD were transferred to Moldova for the purpose of electoral corruption. In this regard, the police documented 138 thousand phone numbers - users, who interacted with the PSB application (developed for PromsvyazBank clients). During the actions, money in the amount of 175 thousand MDL was seized.

On October 25, the police informed²⁸ that 295 minutes were issued on the offense of passive electoral corruption, which were sent according to the competence of NAC. Also on the same day, the police informed²⁹ about the preventive arrest for 30 days of a person detained for bribing

²⁴ EBPS no. 38/9 Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria

²⁵ NAC [press release](#) of 21.10.2024

²⁶ Police [press release](#) of 22.10.2024

²⁷ [Briefing](#) organised by police on 24.10.2024

²⁸ Police [press release](#) of 25.10.2024

²⁹ Police [press release](#) of 25.10.2024

voters in the electoral process and another person for 20 days, accused of having acted as a coordinator of the electoral corruption process³⁰. At the same time, it was reported³¹ that the police from Singerei concluded another 30 minutes of the proceedings on the offense of passive electoral corruption, which were sent according to the competence of NAC. Also on the same day, the police informed about the initiation of a criminal case based on the notification by Promo-LEX, concerning the violation of secrecy of voting.³².

On 26 October, the police informed³³ that they had concluded 341 minutes on contravention on passive electoral corruption, which were sent under the competence of NAC. On the same day, the police reported³⁴ that they had documented several persons traveling to the left bank of the Dniester to collect funds transferred through the PSB system. There were documented persons who allegedly collected 1200 MDL.

On 28 October 2024 the Prosecutor General's Office held a press conference³⁵, in which it said that Russian special services have developed a scheme to transfer money to the Republic of Moldova. Prosecutor General Ion Munteanu said at the press conference on 28 October that the scheme is part of the 'hybrid war' and is being implemented by the formations subordinated to Ilan Shor since spring of 2024. It was also mentioned that in total around 140 thousand accounts have been opened at the Russian bank PromsvyazBank, a bank in the Russian Federation.

On October 30, NAC announced³⁶ that about 1000 minutes of proceedings were being examined on the contravention of passive electoral corruption and fines amounting to more than two million lei were imposed.

Promo-LEX OM has noted that law enforcement bodies have intensified their activities to counter the phenomenon of electoral corruption during the reporting period. We welcome these actions, but we are concerned about the capacity of the law enforcement bodies to quickly resolve the high volume of reported cases.

In this context, we would also like to draw attention to the appearance in the public space of a list of about eight thousand people, who are alleged to be members/ activists/ sympathizers of the political parties behind the electoral corruption. The publication of such a list, when its origin, the veracity of the information and the purpose of publication are unknown, violates certain human rights (the right to privacy and related rights, the right to freedom of association in terms of political preferences, and individual freedom and security of the person).

In addition to efforts to document and counter the phenomenon of electoral corruption, during the observation period, the Police also intensified its communication³⁷ with society in order to inform citizens about the dangers associated with taking or giving electoral bribes. Thus, the Police disseminated several information messages to prevent electoral corruption, both via SMS and TV broadcasters.

³⁰ Police [press release](#) of 25.10.2024

³¹ Police [press release](#) of 25.10.2024

³² Police [press release](#) of 25.10.2024

³³ Police [press release](#) of 26.10.2024

³⁴ Police [press release](#) of 26.10.2024

³⁵ [Press conference](#) on 28.10.2024, organised by General Prosecutor's Office

³⁶ NAC [press release](#) of 30.10.2024

³⁷ [Police](#) sent SMS messages to inform society about the risks associated with electoral corruption

IV. PERFORMANCE OF ELECTORAL COMPETITORS

4.1. Activity of electoral competitors

According to the legal framework provisions³⁸, the electoral campaign for the second round of elections begins after the date of the second round is set by CEC decision, but no later than 10 days before election day. CEC Decision on the organization of the second round was adopted on 23 October 2024.

In the period 23 - 29 October 2024, according to Promo-LEX observers, the two electoral competitors carried out at least 268 promotional activities (see Table 2), of which 57% were carried out for Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) and 43% - Maia Sandu (PAS).

Table no. 2 – Campaign activities carried out

<i>Activities observed</i>	<i>Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM)</i>	<i>Maia Sandu (PAS)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Distribution of information materials	151	98	249
Meetings with voters	1	13	14
Electoral debates	1	2	3
Protests/flashmobs		2	2
TOTAL	153	115	268

The most widely used forms of electoral campaigning were the distribution of electoral information materials (newspapers, flyers, posters) – 93% of activities, and meetings with voters – 5%.

Depending on the location where the activities took place, the most – 18% - were in mun. Chisinau, followed by Balti – 16% and Donduşeni – 7%.

4.2. Electoral advertising

During the monitored period, Promo-LEX observers observed at least 872 instances in which electoral advertising was used to promote presidential candidates (see Table 3). The most used forms were printed information materials (leaflets, flyers) – 28%, followed by street advertising (billboards, panels, tents, etc.) – 23%, and internet advertising – 21%.

Table no. 3. Instances of electoral advertising usage

<i>Type of advertising</i>	<i>Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM)</i>	<i>Maia Sandu (PAS)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Newspapers, leaflets, flyers etc.	148	96	244
Street billboards, tents	130	71	201
Google Ads	115	69	184
Vests, bags, caps, etc.	110	41	151
Sponsored posts	4	71	75
Video spots	2	14	16
Print media		1	1
TOTAL	509	363	872

Out of all reported cases, 58% were in favour of promoting Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) and 42% - Maia Sandu (PAS).

The rules for using and distributing electoral advertising are laid down in the CEC Regulation on the manner of provision, distribution and dissemination of political and electoral advertising and messages of public interest³⁹ (hereinafter the Regulation). According to point 76 of the same normative act, **it is forbidden to place electoral advertising** on the pavilions of public transportation stations, on trees and/or by damaging/destroying trees, on pillars, in cemeteries, shrines, squares, parks, public gardens, on wayside crosses, on the outer side of windows and

³⁸ Art. 70. para. (3) [Electoral Code](#).

³⁹ CEC [Regulation](#) on the manner of provision, distribution and broadcasting of political and electoral advertising and messages of public interest, approved by CEC Decision no. 1155 of 4 August 2023.

balconies of residential blocks, on the fences of private households, as well as on their enclosures, etc. Placing advertising outside the established places constitutes a contravention and is punishable according to the Contravention Code.

Contrary to the above, at least three cases of electoral advertising placed/distributed in unauthorised places were observed (on fences, pillars, public stations, etc.). Of these, Maia Sandu (PAS) was involved in two cases and Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) in one case.

4.3. Misuse of administrative resources

During the monitored period, at least 8 cases of misuse of administrative resources were found, involving Maia Sandu (PAS).

On 25 October 2024, PAS MP Ina Coşeru and presidential adviser Iuliana Cantaragiu had an electoral meeting with the employees of the Town Hall of com. Lencăuți, Ocnita, during working hours.

On 26 October 2024, Dumitru Alaiba, Minister of Economic Development and Digitization, distributed printed materials to promote candidate Maia Sandu (PAS) in Cimislia.

On 27 October 2024, PAS Youth Cahul posted on META social networks a video spot promoting the projects implemented under the 'European Village' program in the villages of Cahul district, mentioning that the works were carried out thanks to Maia Sandu (PAS).

On 24 October 2024, in the city of Ungheni, a general assembly with the parents of TL Vasile Alecsandri students took place during working hours (at 16:00). During the meeting, they discussed about the students' achievements, challenges, etc. Also, the president of the district Dionisie Ternovschi (PAS) came with a speech, promising to help the institution to get funding for the construction of a sports hall, but with one condition: to support the European path and Maia Sandu (PAS).

Also, during the working week, in 2 cases it was observed that a PAS MP - Mariana Cusnir - was carrying out electoral campaigning during working hours on working days (24 and 25 October 2024, in Orhei). With regard to the work of the MPs, we reiterate that the legislation clearly stipulates how the Parliament's working regime should be organized⁴⁰.

On social networks⁴¹ the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Romania, Victor Chirilă, addresses citizens 'not to be fooled by 'Trojan horses', an idea launched by the presidential candidate Maia Sandu during the electoral debates on 27.10.2024⁴², but also distributes Maia Sandu's electoral campaign messages⁴³. At the same time, the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the Kingdom of Belgium, Viorel Cibotaru distributed a message of support for Maia Sandu⁴⁴.

We emphasize that one of the duties of the ambassadors of the Republic of Moldova, on mission abroad, is to provide assistance and protection to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, natural and legal persons, abroad. The exercise of this task should be carried out strictly under the imperative of this function, in the spirit of providing assistance and protection to the citizens of the Republic of Moldova and not for electoral purposes. Ambassadors, as persons of public

⁴⁰ Art. 102 from [Law](#) no. 797 of 02 April 1996 for adoption of Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

⁴¹ [Post](#) from 27.10.2024 of the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Romania, Victor Chirilă

⁴² [Electoral debates](#) from 27.10.2024

⁴³ Posts from [29.10.2024](#) and [30.10.2024](#) of the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Romania, Victor Chirilă

⁴⁴ [Post](#) from 27.10.2024 of the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the Kingdom of Belgium, Viorel Cibotaru

dignity, have an obligation to refrain from using administrative resources, including through the prestige and public presence that comes with the position of an ambassador.

4.4. Involvement of religious denominations and trade unions in the electoral campaign

Electoral campaigning by non-commercial organizations, trade unions, employers, representatives of religious denominations, including in places of worship, during the electoral campaign is punishable⁴⁵. Also, the legal framework⁴⁶ prohibits the financing or any form of material support of electoral competitors by non-commercial organizations, trade unions, charitable or religious organizations.

Contrary to the above, we note that on 25 October 2024, Roman Botezat, priest at the Romanian Orthodox Parish ‚Acoperemântul Maicii Domnului’ (Covering of Mother of God) in the t. Donduşeni, published on his social media page several posts on why Maia Sandu should be voted on 3 November 2024 (her contribution in maintaining good relations with Romania, which led to the donation of several school minibuses for children, the construction of the church ‚Acoperemântul Maicii Domnului’ (Covering of Mother of God) in Donduşeni, the construction of the pastoral-social center ‚Bishop Partenie Ciopron’ in Donduşeni t., etc.).

Conduct of electoral campaigning was also observed in the case of trade unions. Thus, on October 28, 2024, the Facebook page of the Trade Union Federation of Education and Science posted the message of the President of the Federation, Ghenadie Donos, on behalf of the Executive Bureau of the Federation, urging union members, the whole society to say ‚a firm YES, further, to the European future of the Republic of Moldova, with a candidate for the office of President of the country, who honestly and with dignity opened the path of our country to the European Union, which is associated with the European vector of the Republic of Moldova! We vote for the European future! Save Moldova!’⁴⁷. This message is an electoral campaign message for candidate Maia Sandu (PAS), who adopted the slogan ‚We save Moldova’ before the second round of the presidential elections. At the same time, PAS also distributed the Federation's electoral campaign message⁴⁸.

4.5. Acts of intimidation/Black PR

Negative campaigning was observed during the campaign for the second round of the presidential election.

Thus, during the monitored period, representatives of candidate Maia Sandu (PAS) distributed electoral materials (flyers printed in a circulation of about 666.000 copies) promoting 6 main hypotheses/forecasts in case her counter-candidate is elected as president: return of fugitive bandits and their seizure of power; a president with no respect from anyone outside; closure of the European market; jeopardizing free movement of citizens in the EU; emigration of young people, stopping financial aid from the EU, danger of being involved in war.

On 26 October 2024, a video spot was distributed on the social networks of PR representatives, in which several arguments were put forward to vote against candidate Maia Sandu (PAS), mentioning several unpopular actions, such as the closure of several educational institutions, the opposition press, the increase in gas prices, etc.

⁴⁵ Art. 52, para. (2) [Contravention Code](#).

⁴⁶ Art. 54, para. (5) [Electoral Code](#).

⁴⁷ [Post](#) on the social media page of the Trade Union Federation of Education and Science, from 28 October 2024.

⁴⁸ [Post](#) on PAS social media page on 29 October 2024.

On 26 October 2024, a video spot was posted on social media in which PAS local councillors from Gura Bîcului village, Anenii Noi, verbally attacked campaigners who were distributing newspapers in support of candidate Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) in the locality, accusing them of harming the voters' opinion.

On 27 October 2024, in Basarabasca, a billboard in support of candidate Maia Sandu (PAS) was vandalized and sprayed with black paint.

On 28 October 2024, in mun. Balti, it was reported that a group of unidentified persons installed a banner of about 48 square meters, showing the image of candidate Maia Sandu (PAS) in military uniform, with a helmet on her head and a rifle in her hands (assimilating her image with the image of war).

On 28 October in a press briefing and a press release, the PSRM reported about a case that took place in the Buiucani sector, mun. Chisinau⁴⁹, in which several people (alleged supporters of Maia Sandu (PAS)) physically assaulted two PSRM campaigners, one of whom was taken to the emergency hospital in a serious condition⁵⁰. On this case, a complaint was filed with the police.

⁴⁹ Post on [Telegram](#) of the incident described.

⁵⁰ [Press briefing](#) held by the Vice-President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Vlad Batrîncea on 28 October 2024, PSRM [press release](#) from 28 October 2024.

V. ELECTION AND ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN FINANCING

5.1. Financial reporting to CEC

During the monitored period, electoral competitors had to submit a financial report on electoral campaign financing for the second round of elections - on 28 October 2024. Both Maia Sandu (PAS) and Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) submitted their reports within the legal deadline.

CEC published them on its official website, but in the same end-user unfriendly format (without respecting open data principles, in reusable format).

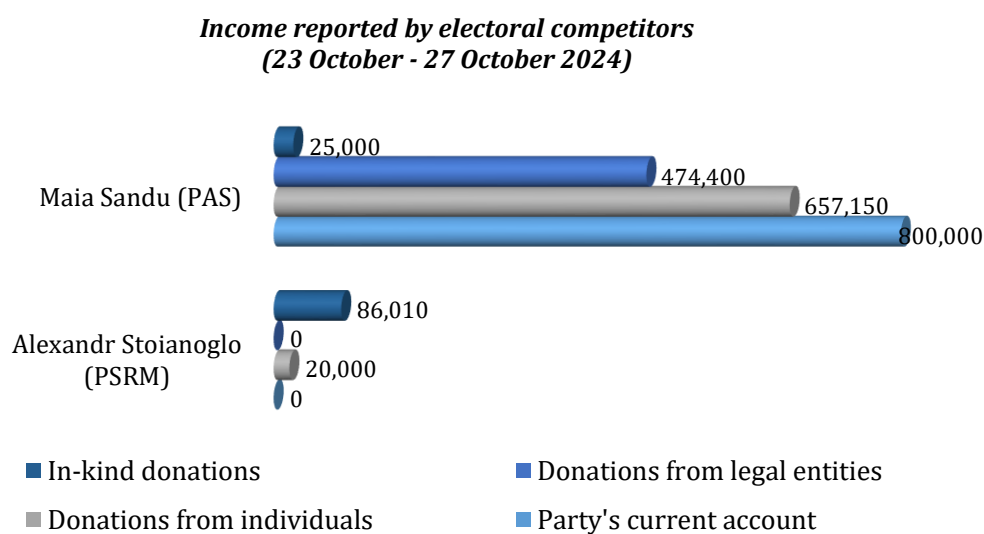
5.2. Income and expenditure reported to CEC

5.2.1. Reported income and its source

For the period 23 - 27 October 2024, the two electoral competitors reported income totalling 2,062,560 MDL, of which 111,010 MDL – from in-kind donations (5% of total declared income). We also note that at the end of the first round of elections, the 'Electoral Fund' account of Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) registered a figure of 1,926,865 MDL, and that of candidate Maia Sandu (PAS) - 42,458 MDL.

Most income was declared by Maia Sandu (PAS) - 95% (1,956,550 MDL) of the total, and 5% (106,010 MDL) - by Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) – see Chart no. 1.

Chart no. 1



By source of income, the situation is as follows:

- 39% (800 thousand MDL) were the financial means transferred from the PAS current account to Maia Sandu's 'Electoral Fund' account (PAS), the money being from state budget allocations;
- 33% (677 thousand MDL) were donations from individuals;
- 23% (474 thousand MDL) were financial donations from legal entities;
- 5% (111 thousand MDL) came from in-kind donations.

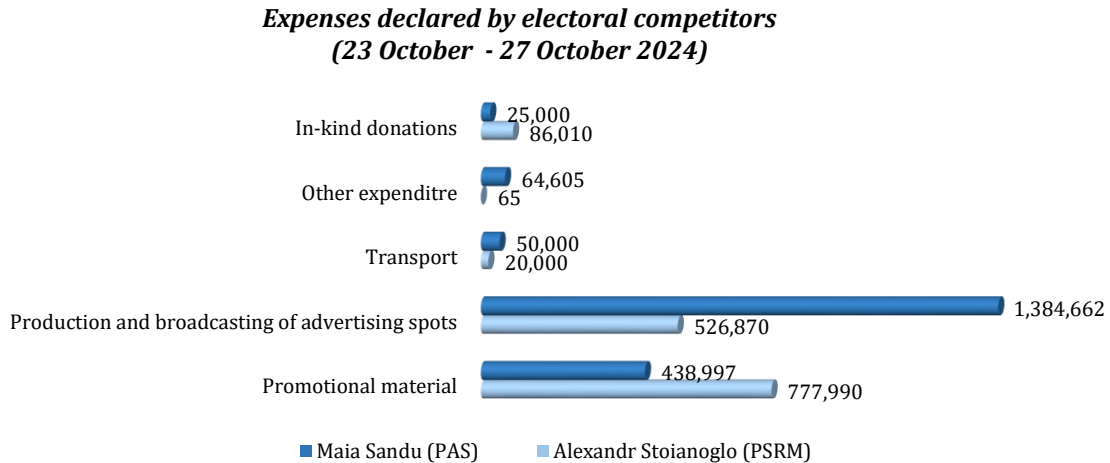
In the case of reported in-kind donations, 77% of these were in the form of works and services and 23% in the form of goods.

5.2.2. Expenditure declared and its destination

For the period 23 - 27 October 2024, the two electoral competitors declared expenditures totalling 3,374,198.14 MDL, of which 111,010 MDL were in-kind donations.

The most expenditures were declared by Maia Sandu (PAS), who reported 58% of the total reported expenditures, and Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) - 48% (see Chart 2).

Chart no. 2



By destination of the financial expenditure reported, the most - 57% - was for the production and broadcasting of advertising spots, followed by expenditure on promotional materials - 36%, and expenditure from in-kind donations - 3% (see Chart 2).

5.3. Civic monitoring of electoral campaign financing

Based on reports completed by Promo-LEX observers, the expenditures of electoral competitors Maia Sandu (PAS) and Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) were estimated for the period 23 - 27 October 2024. Once estimated, the respective expenditures were cross-checked with the expenditures declared to CEC in the campaign financing reports. The minimum market prices identified for services, goods and works used for electoral campaign purposes were applied as methodological benchmarks for estimating the expenditures.

We note that these prices were applied uniformly for both electoral competitors. In this regard, we consider that there may be some discrepancies between the costs applied by Promo-LEX and those indicated by electoral competitors (both when reporting financial expenditures and expenditures from in-kind donations).

5.3.1. Estimation of expenditure for the electoral campaign

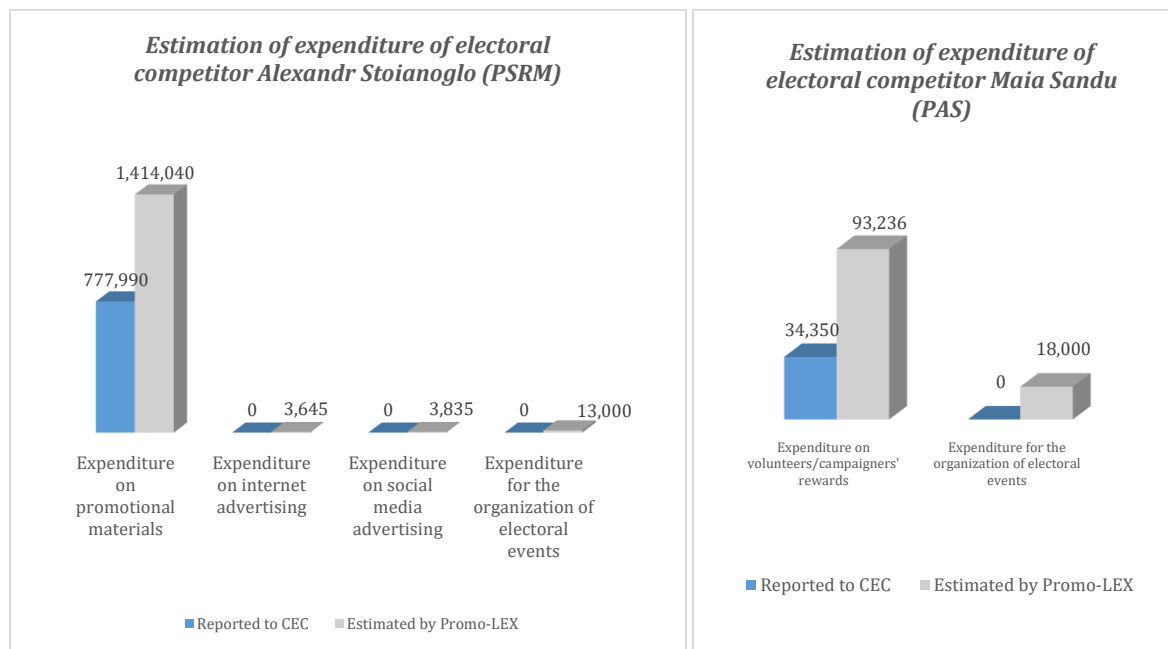
During the monitoring period, Promo-LEX observers reported on the organization of electoral meetings, distribution of electoral materials, activities involving campaigners/volunteers and their travel to the localities of the Republic of Moldova, as well as on sponsored advertising on social networks⁵¹, and the use of internet advertising through live broadcasting of various events organized for promotional purposes⁵².

⁵¹ Similarly, expenditures for advertising with anti-government and anti PAS messages, amounting to at least 64,211 MDL, made by Veaceslav Platon, were also observed.

⁵² We remind you about the impossibility to estimate the expenditures for Google Ads, i.e. the declared amounts exclude the expenditures incurred for these services.

In the context of the above, Promo-LEX OM estimated unreported expenditures for the electoral campaign activities of the two electoral competitors amounting to at least **733,416 MDL**. Of the total estimated expenditures, the most unreported expenditures were in the case of Alexandr Stoianoglo (PSRM) - 90%, amounting to 656,530 MDL. For the electoral competitor Maia Sandu (PAS), expenditure amounting to 76,886 MDL was estimated as unreported (see Chart no. 1)

Chart no. 3 Estimation of electoral competitors' expenditures

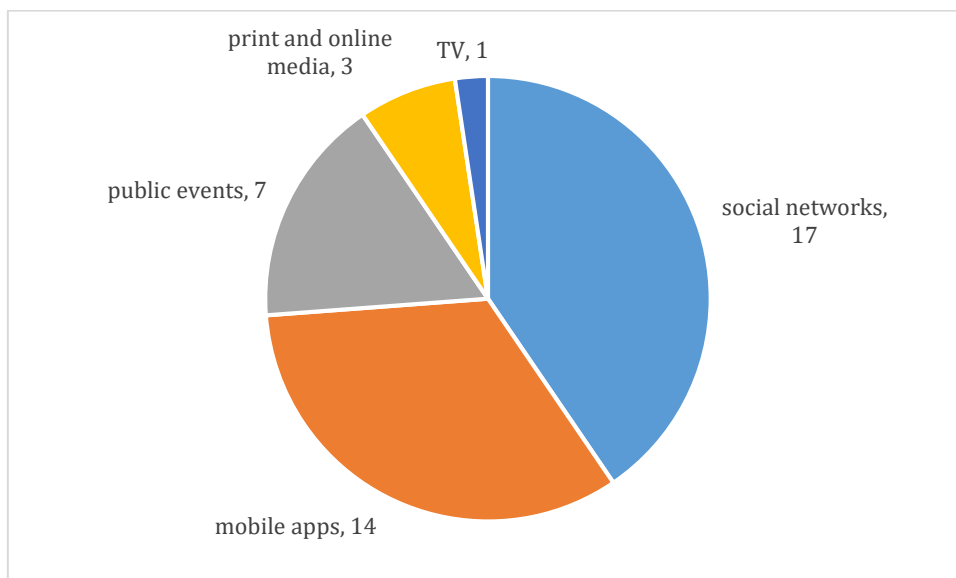


By destination of expenditures estimated as unreported, most were estimated for promotional materials (636,050 MDL) – **87%**, followed by rewards to volunteers/agitators (58,886 MDL) – **8%**, organization of events (31,000 MDL) – **4%**, advertising on social networks (3,835 MDL) – **1%**, and use of internet advertising (3,645 MDL).

VI. HATE SPEECH AND INCITEMENT TO DISCRIMINATION

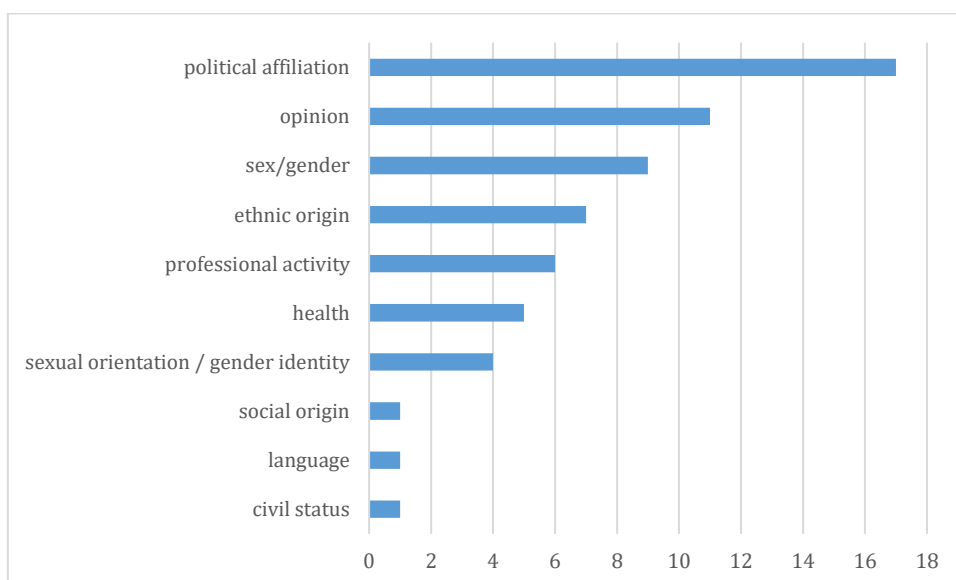
In the period 7 - October 24, 2024, at least 42 cases of hate speech and other manifestations of intolerance were identified. Of these, 41 cases occurred in an electoral context. The majority of the cases (31 cases) were spread through mobile apps and social media (see Chart 4).

Chart no. 4. General categories of sources



The most common criteria for hate speech were 'political affiliation', 'opinion' and 'sex/gender' (see Chart 5). Men (26 cases) aged 35-50 (15 cases) were the most frequent users of hate speech. The 41 hate speech cases were viewed more than 2 million times and distributed more than 20 thousand times.

Chart no 5. Criteria behind hate speech



During this period, cases of hate speech took the form of stereotype promotion, sexist language, homophobic speech, promotion and justification of discrimination, and incitement to violent actions.

Promotion of gender stereotypes and sexist language were used in relation to both female and male candidates. In both cases, their aim was to denigrate and humiliate people on the criteria of ‚sex‘ and ‚gender‘. For example, during a protest organized by ‚Izvorul Speranței‘ (Fountain of Hope) a non-governmental organization founded by a group of bloggers in 2022, Dina Carpinschi said:

*‘All these four years it (n. tr. Maia Sandu) has been partying on our money, having holidays worth millions. Of course, there are bad days – that’s when she went shopping and bought radars instead of dresses for some reason. But whatever. Every woman is entitled to some small things she doesn’t need in her wardrobe afterwards’.*⁵³

An example of promoting violence against women in politics was identified on Telegram. An image showing an object resembling a pile of wood in the shape of a bonfire is accompanied by the following text:

*‘A strange object appeared near the Port Mall. Are they going to burn the witch? Okay, the location is wrong. WTF?! Here’s a hint: go to 154 Stefan cel Mare Boulevard (address of the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova)’.*⁵⁴

Both before 20 October 2024 and after the first round of the presidential elections, the ‘ethnic origin’ criterion was at the basis of hate speech. As in the case of criteria ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘gender identity’, the criterion ‘ethnic origin’ underpinned different forms of hate speech, from promoting stereotypes to promoting and justifying discrimination. For example, the promotion of stereotypes towards Roma, Jews and Gagauz was found in several public messages:

*‚Gagauz are traitors and thieves by nature. Never trust them’.*⁵⁵

*‘Is it just us that she reminds us of a gypsy who tries to con people out of money on the street? ‘Take it out of your purse, clench it in your fist, and I’ll whisper near it. And if you don’t do that, you won’t get married’.*⁵⁶

*‘A Jew will never do anything for you, he will only do it for himself (n. tr. Ilan Șor)’.*⁵⁷

*‚[...] a true Moldovan never votes for a Gagauz. Gagauz means traitor of the country’.*⁵⁸

Cases of incitement to discrimination and violence on grounds of ‚political opinion‘ and ‚political affiliation‘ were also identified online both before the first round of the presidential elections and after 20 October.

For example, a supporter of the political party ‚Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova‘ said in a video:

*‘It’s a pity that Igor Nikolayevich (n. tr. Igor Dodon) calls for moderation. If it were up to me, I would beat up and beat up those Tarlevs, Voronins, especially that shit Usatii who doesn’t know what he’s talking about.’*⁵⁹

However, the number of redistributions of speech inciting discrimination and violence increased after the publication of the results of the presidential elections and the republican constitutional referendum.

World and European champion Anastasia Nichita published a message inciting discrimination against people who voted ‚No‘ in the republican constitutional referendum:

⁵³ Dina Carpinschi, [Protest](#), Izvorul Spranței, 8 October 2024, min.: 00:42, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁵⁴ Unknown, [Post](#), WTF Moldova, Telegram, 23 October 2024, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁵⁵ Iura Dascălu Popovici, [Post](#), Facebook, 15 October 2024, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁵⁶ Unknown, [Post](#), WTF Moldova, Telegram, 24 October 2024, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁵⁷ Marin Andonii, [LIVE](#), TikTok, 10 October 2024, last accessed: 10 October 2024.

⁵⁸ Radu Dutcovici, [LIVE](#): Radu Dutcovici on election results, Facebook, 21 October 2024, min.: 07:51, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁵⁹ Nicolai Balan, [Video material](#), TikTok, 11 October 2024, min.: 04:22, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

*,I propose that all Romanian passports of those who voted NO in the European Union should be extracted, and Moldovans in Europe who voted NO should be deported to the Republic of Moldova, wait no, better to Siberia!'*⁶⁰

Radu Dutcovici, an activist, incited discrimination against representatives of the Orthodox Church who were reported in the Moldovan press to have made a pilgrimage to the Russian Federation organized and financed by the Russian Patriarchate⁶¹. He said:

*,Those who went to Moscow, I went, I ran to the airport, I went to uncover, to show. I published information from people. Where are the arrested priests? The Church worked against the referendum and against Maia Sandu. I mean the Russian Church. Kremlin agents. The agents of the KGB, the FSB, worked against the national interest, against the European interest and vector, against the European future, against peace. Arrest all agents, deport them! Get them out of the churches. Do as they did in Ukraine, hand them over to the Ukrainians. That's what they should do to them. We want to see action.'*⁶²

A case of incitement to violence, published on social networks, according to the author⁶³, in 2023, was republished by other sources and went viral online, being presented as a message by a supporter of candidate Maia Sandu and the political party 'Action and Solidarity'. This material is not available on the author's accounts, but has been distributed by at least eight sources, mainly on Telegram, and has been viewed more than 39 thousand times.

*,...If I were the president for at least one week, I would impose on the people of the Republic of Moldova, I would impose a mandatory test consisting of 30-40 questions in different fields such as Romanian language, history, geography, logic, mathematics, yes, and all those who get less than 60-70 percent should be shot in the head because otherwise how can we clean the Republic of Moldova of all moldoboi (n.tr. – Moldovan oxen), otherwise it's not possible. But if we wait for the older generations to die, we have a long time to wait, because they have given birth to children and children have given birth to children, and they are still like this: "Hey, it was fine before. Here's what my grandma told me, grandpa told me. With the Russians? We lived well with the Russians'. So we have to shoot them in the head, otherwise we'll remain in degradation for another 200-300 years.'*⁶⁴

In the context of the electoral campaign, as well as the actions of law enforcement bodies to combat electoral corruption and illegal financing of political parties, Vladimir Vitiuc, former deputy in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, became the target of dehumanization and incitement to violence by his party colleagues (the political party 'Shor', declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court decision of June 19, 2023⁶⁵). This happened after Vladimir Vitiuc made statements before the prosecutor's office. During a protest organized by the political bloc 'VICTORIA', a representative of this bloc said:

*'Friends, good afternoon to all. We have come to you from the city of Balti. Vitiuk is just from the city of Balti. Unfortunately, we wanted to call the pest extermination service. This is a service that cleans the building from various harmful rodents, from rats, from mice. And the main rat, which today could fight in this building, decided to refuse to visit this building today. Apparently, it felt what was going to happen.'*⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Anastasia Nichita, [Story like post](#), Instagram, 21 October 2024, last accessed: 21 October 2024.

⁶¹ Radio Europa Liberă, [article](#), 'Nearly 500 priests and parishioners from Moldova went on pilgrimages to Moscow, funded by the Russian Patriarchate', 23 September 2024, last accessed 29 October 2024.

⁶² Radu Dutcovici, [LIVE](#): Radu Dutcovici on election results, Facebook, 21 October 2024, min.: 21:17, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁶³ Daniel Catruc, [Video statement](#), Facebook, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁶⁴ Daniel Catruc, [Video material](#), Telegram, min.: 00: 24, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁶⁵ Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, [Judgement](#), 19 June 2023, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

⁶⁶ Unknown, [Protest](#), 17 October 2024, Facebook, min.: 39:05, last accessed: 29 October 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

1. Examining whether the regulatory framework should be amended to make the grounds for refusing accreditation of observers clear and predictable.
2. Amending the Electoral Code so that the procedure for confirming the representatives of electoral competitors in electoral bodies is clear and easy.

To Electoral Bodies

3. Substantiated reasoning for decisions rejecting applications for registration, accreditation or confirmation of electoral subjects.
4. Proactively publishing detailed and comprehensive information on the organization and conduct of elections.
5. Respecting the material jurisdiction for settling contestations.

To representatives of religious denominations

6. Refraining from electoral campaigning for one or more electoral competitors.

ABBREVIATIONS

para. – paragraph

PA – Public Association

art. – article

EBPS – electoral bureau of polling station

CEC – Central Electoral Commission

ECEC – Electoral Constituency Electoral Council level II

Com. – commune

NAC – National Anti-Corruption Centre

let. – letter

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs

OM – Misiune de observare

no. – number

t. – town

OSCE/ODIHR – OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

LTO – long-term observer

STO – short-term observer

PAS – Political Party Action and Solidarity

RP – Renaissance Party

PSRM – Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova

PSB – PromsvyazBank

pt. – point

d. – district

REO – Register of Electoral Officials

EU – European Union

USAID – United States Agency for International Development