



## **ENEMO International Election Observation Mission**

### **Early Parliamentary Elections, 11 July - Moldova 2021**

#### **STATEMENT OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**12 July, 2021**

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*ENEMO preliminarily assesses that the electoral process, including the Election Day, was conducted mostly in line with international standards. Elections were administered efficiently and in a transparent manner by the electoral administration, although some of the most important CEC decisions put into question the impartiality of some of its members. The campaign was competitive but marred by a number of alleged violations including misuse of administrative resources, illegal financing, and vote-buying. The polarized and largely biased media landscape, as well as the dissemination of false information, have limited the range of political views presented to voters. Delays in complaints adjudication as well as inconsistent decisions on key aspects of the electoral process additionally affected legal certainty.*

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On 1 June the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) deployed an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to Moldova to observe the Early Parliamentary Elections of 11 July 2021. This is ENEMO's fifth mission to Moldova.

ENEMO has accredited a total of 7 Core Team experts and ten long-term observers (LTOs). Due to health risks created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the IEOM is operating partially remotely, with only a part of the Core Team being deployed in the country. LTOs were additionally deployed in Moldova for Election Day, to observe a selected number of polling stations. ENEMO observed the opening of polling stations, voting and counting processes at 158 polling stations.

Additionally, up until July 10, the ENEMO IEOM conducted 738 meetings, 274 with election management bodies, 98 with political parties, 58 with candidates, 94 with state officials, 59 with media, 138 with domestic civil society organizations and 17 with other stakeholders, in addition to observing 23 campaign activities (meetings or rallies).

The mission will monitor and assess the overall political and electoral environment, conduct of election management bodies, campaigning, gender equity, voting and tabulation processes, electoral dispute resolutions and other crucial aspects of the process, based on international standards for democratic elections and the Moldovan legal framework. ENEMO will raise awareness of the domestic and international community regarding the main challenges and problems observed in elections, thus advocating for adequate policy changes through the adoption of concrete recommendations.

This Preliminary Statement is based on ENEMO's findings from the pre-election period and the Election Day. The Statement should be considered in conjunction with the Interim Report of the mission, issued on 30 June. The Mission will stay in the country until the conclusion of the electoral process to follow post-election developments. A final report, including a full assessment, which will depend in part on the conduct of the remaining stages of the elections, detailed findings, and recommendations will be issued within sixty days from the certification of results.

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## Preliminary Conclusions

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The 11 July 2021 early parliamentary elections were generally competitive and fundamental rights were respected overall. Election Day was held in a calm environment, despite some irregularities observed which did not affect the legitimacy of the process. The preliminary turnout as announced by the CEC was 48.41 percent. According to preliminary results, two political parties (PAS and ŞOR) and one electoral bloc (BECS) are expected to take part in the new parliament's composition.

The electoral legislation can guarantee the conduct of fair and democratic elections in accordance with international standards. However, due to problems revealed in practice caused by insufficient or unclear regulations, ENEMO assesses that the existing regulations remain to be amended, in order to avoid controversial interpretations and ensure a competitive and fair electoral environment.

Election day was calm with no major incidents and violations detected. As ENEMO observers reported at the observed polling stations, overall electoral procedures were followed by the PEBs in compliance with the legislation. Identified irregularities mostly related with the accessibility of polling stations, COVID-19 prevention measures, secrecy of the vote, isolated facts of campaigning materials in the vicinity of polling stations, etc. Also, in two observed polling stations indications of organized transportation of voters were reported and in two other cases ballots were issued without verification of voters in the SAIS-E system due to internet connection problems. Women were well represented at observed polling stations, constituting 85 percent of the PEB members.

The CEC mostly met all legal deadlines and conducted its activities efficiently, despite facing multiple challenges, such as an insufficient budget to fully finance the process, organizing polling stations abroad and those for voters from the left bank of the Dniester river, implementing COVID-19 prevention measures for ensuring protection of the health of voters, EMB members and other stakeholders.

While the conduct of the electoral process by the CEC was generally assessed by most interlocutors as professional and transparent, several interlocutors voiced concerns that in specific cases, the CEC decision-making process was politically motivated. Concerns were related to the decisions pertaining to the establishment of polling stations for voters abroad and from the left bank of the Dniester river, as well as to the failure to adopt a decision on the organized transportation of voters on Election Day.

District Electoral Councils (DECs) and Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs) were mostly formed within the legal deadline and in fulfillment of the legal requirements. The work of DECs was generally evaluated as professional and trustworthy by the vast majority of the mission's interlocutors. Several changes in PEBs composition, mainly due to withdrawal of PEB members as well as scarcity of funds, were reported by ENEMO observers. However, these replacement issues did not seem to significantly affect the process overall.

The legal provisions related to electoral campaigning enshrined in the Electoral Code are mostly in line with international standards. However, a number of standing issues in the electoral legislation remain, *inter alia* leaving space for early campaigning, uneven timeframes for candidate registration and start of the campaigns (affecting equality of opportunity), and excessive bans on use of state symbols and images (affecting freedom of expression).

ENEMO assesses the campaigning environment as generally peaceful and calm, although low-key until the last two weeks leading to Election Day. Radical statements and intolerant messages damaged the image of the campaign, with some of these messages containing discriminatory or inflammatory language. The campaign environment was additionally marred by negative campaigning and accusations of corruption.

The lack of consistent reaction by public authorities when it comes to non-compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures in campaign events is concerning, as are allegations of bias by state institutions in the campaign affecting the principle of equality among electoral contestants. Cases of misuse of administrative resources were reported in the form of visits to public institutions by some contestants and campaigning in municipal enterprises in several regions. Some cases of violence, allegations of vote buying and instances of political intimidation were also reported by the mission's observers.

In general, contestants submitted financial reports as prescribed, although some parties had to subsequently file corrected reports. The CEC published these reports on the website, mostly within the legal deadlines. However, ENEMO assesses that the lack of legal mechanisms to enable the CEC to comprehensively monitor campaign expenses and financial reports on one hand, and cases of non-respect of the law by some electoral contestants on the other, negatively affected the general transparency of campaign finance. Furthermore, this lack of transparency constrains the scope of available information for voters to exercise an informed choice.

Overall the media landscape in Moldova is pluralistic, but polarized with a lack of independence from political interests. Television is the main source of information followed by online and social media. Despite significantly declining circulation rates of print media, newspapers remained influential online, particularly at the local level. Social media played a more important role than ever, which also gave rise to several issues, including “fake news” and fake polls with a possible influence on election results. In addition, there is a lack of oversight of campaign and media reporting related to elections.

The Audiovisual Council (AC) responsible for monitoring the implementation of provisions on election campaigns in the media, has not effectively performed and was unable to apply swift sanctions to broadcasters that violated the legal framework, and did not submit to the CEC, two days prior to Election Day, the summary report on monitoring the conduct of the media during the campaign.

All candidates were able to campaign freely and freedom of speech was respected. However, many ENEMO interlocutors voiced concerns that the campaign environment was affected by disinformation tactics, instances of negative campaigning, intolerant rhetoric and hate speech.

The right to file complaints is guaranteed by the legislation. Though, as adjudication of complaints proved those regulations need further elaboration and improvement as they do not ensure the right to effective remedy. There were a number of problems revealed in practice, such as the delayed examination of complaints and long timeframes, misunderstanding over the competent authority for adjudicating complaints and procedures to be followed, as well as the right to submit complaints. Subsequently, this lack of clarity resulted in protracted adjudication and delayed resolution of some of the electoral disputes. This practice could have damaged the integrity of the electoral process and also raises questions about the impartiality of the respective competent authority, especially when it comes to crucial electoral issues.

## Background

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Last parliamentary elections held in February 2019 did not result in a stable parliamentary majority. Only four lists entered the parliament without a clear majority: (1) the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), (2) the Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM), (3) the ACUM (“Now”) - an electoral alliance of DA and PAS, and (4) the Șor Party.

The new ruling coalition consisting of ACUM and PSRM, two parties with the opposite policy orientation, was formed and resulted in the forming of the government led by Maia Sandu of PAS. Sandu’s government lasted only 5 months and was replaced by a government formed by the PRSM-PDM coalition led by PM Ion Chicu. Prime Minister Chicu resigned after Maia Sandu was elected in the second round for the President of the Republic of Moldova in November 2020 elections, defeating incumbent president Igor Dodon. Chicu’s resignation was followed by the forming of an interim government led by Prime Minister Aureliu Ciocoi, current Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

Early parliamentary elections were caused by a lack of agreement among the newly elected President of the Republic Sandu and the parliamentary majority consisting mainly of PSRM and PDM MPs regarding the forming of a new government. The Constitution stipulates that the President nominates a candidate for the Prime Minister after consultations with the parliamentary groups. If parliament fails to elect the Prime Minister at least two times, the President has the right to dissolve the Parliament. After several failures by the parliament to approve the candidacy for the Prime Minister, on 29 March, President Sandu sent an appeal to the Constitutional Court to recognize the existence of circumstances for the dissolution of parliament. In order to prevent this, the parliamentary majority declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 situation, which was recognized by the Constitutional Court as unconstitutional on 28 April. Later on the same day, President Sandu dissolved the parliament and called for the early parliamentary elections to be scheduled on 11 July.

## Legal framework and electoral system

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The legislative framework regulating elections is comprehensive and different legal acts<sup>1</sup>, supplemented by CEC decisions, regulate all election-related issues. Some important amendments since the last parliamentary elections in 2019 concern issues such as campaign funding<sup>2</sup> and the electoral system, though amendments adopted in 2020 have not changed any substantial regulations. Accordingly, there are aspects requiring improvement, as a consequence of unclear and insufficient regulations.<sup>3</sup> Overall however, the legal framework can guarantee the conduct of fair and democratic elections if implemented in good faith.

The electoral system has undergone important changes since the last Parliamentary Elections in 2019. The mixed electoral system was annulled and the proportional representation system reintroduced. Due to these changes, the 101 members of the Parliament are elected based on a proportional representation system (List PR) in a single nationwide constituency. The nationwide electoral threshold varies depending on the type of list: five percent for single parties or organizations; seven percent for an electoral bloc of two or more parties;<sup>4</sup> and two percent for independent candidates. For candidate lists, 40 percent representation of both sexes is mandatory. In 2019 a requirement was also introduced that among every ten candidates there should be at least four candidates of both sexes.

## Election Administration

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The 11 July Early Parliamentary Elections were managed by a three-tiered election administration: the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), 37<sup>5</sup> District Electoral Councils (DECs) and 2150 Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs) in total. The CEC supervised the activities of DECs and PEBs, and was responsible for registering electoral contestants, compiling and distributing voter lists, aggregating election results, overseeing campaign finance, etc. DECs and PEBs administered voting and counting procedures on Election Day.

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<sup>1</sup> Electoral Code, the Law on Political Parties and the Law on the State Automated Information System. “Elections”, the Law on Ensuring Equal Rights of Women and Men, Law on Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities, the Criminal Code, the Administrative Code, etc.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, reducing the limits on donations; allowing citizens of Moldova living abroad to donate; etc.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, definition of electoral campaign, election dispute resolution, campaign funding, etc.

<sup>4</sup> In 2019 as a result of amendments the threshold for contestants was lowered - for a party or other socio-political organization from 6 percent to 5 percent, and for an electoral bloc from 8 percent to 7 percent of the valid votes.

<sup>5</sup> The numbering of DECs goes up to 38, but only 37 of them were established by the CEC. DEC no. 3, designated for the Bender electoral district, was not established. DEC 37 was covering polling stations established for voters residing on the left bank of the River Dniester, including the Municipality of Bender and some localities of Causeni District.

## A. Central Electoral Commission (CEC)

The CEC faced multiple challenges in these elections, including an insufficient budget to fully finance the process (despite several requests to the Government), the challenge of organizing polling stations abroad and those for voters from the left bank of the Dniester river, the issue of regulating transportation of voters on Election Day, implementing COVID-19 prevention measures and organizing voting while ensuring protection of the health of voters, EMB members and other stakeholders.

While the conduct of the electoral process by the CEC was generally assessed by most interlocutors as professional and transparent, several interlocutors voiced concerns that in specific cases, the CEC decision-making process was politically motivated. Concerns were related to the decision pertaining to the establishment of polling stations for voters abroad, which were initially established without respecting the three criteria<sup>6</sup> provided by the Electoral Code, the establishment of polling stations for voters from the left bank of Dniester river, as well as the failure to adopt a decision on the organized transportation of voters on Election Day.

The CEC's estimated expenditures for the conduct of the Early Parliamentary Elections amounted to 125,046,700 MDL<sup>7</sup>, but the Government allocated only 56 percent<sup>8</sup> of the expenditures requested by the CEC, from the Government reserve fund. While 12,000,000 MDL were provided in kind by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection and another 7,000,000 MDL were spent directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration for polling stations abroad, 22,400,000 MDL were still required. As the mission was informed, the Government could provide additional funds, but a decision on this issue was not adopted, as it lacked support from the majority of its members. ENEMO raises concerns regarding this approach, which could have jeopardized the proper conduct of these elections.

The CEC decided<sup>9</sup> to print 3,644,642 ballots, including for polling stations abroad<sup>10</sup> and those for voters from the left bank of Dniester river<sup>11</sup>. Out of the total number, 2,815,844 ballots were printed in state language and 828,798 in Russian language.

Regular sessions were organized twice a week, while extraordinary sessions were held when needed. The CEC held 30 sessions<sup>12</sup>, and adopted a total of 224 decisions since the start of the

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<sup>6</sup> Article 31, par. 3 of the Electoral Code.

<sup>7</sup> CEC decision Nr. [4816](#) of 30.04.2021, on the approval of the estimated expenditure for the organization and conduct of the Early Parliamentary Elections of 11 July, 2021. The total estimation of costs pertaining to activities of the CEC, DEC's and PEBs in the country and abroad as well as for COVID-19 prevention equipment was 122,925,400 MDL, and another 2,121,300 MDL for activities of the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training.

<sup>8</sup> [DECISION](#) Nr. 57 of 12-05-2021 on the allocation of financial means.

<sup>9</sup> CEC decision Nr. [5062](#) of 25.06.2021.

<sup>10</sup> The CEC printed 726,700 ballots for polling stations for voters abroad, of which 662,600 in state language and 64,100 in Russian.

<sup>11</sup> For the 41 polling stations established for voters from the left bank of the Dniester (Transnistria) 123,000 ballots were printed, of which 41,000 in the state language, and 82,000 in Russian.

<sup>12</sup> The mission was able to observe 20 CEC sessions.

electoral period. Most of the resolutions were related to registration of electoral contestants, establishment of lower level EMBs, accreditation of observers, electoral campaign finances, etc.

The CEC sessions were open to observers and media. The CEC did manage to keep the public informed through live broadcasting of sessions on Facebook and YouTube and timely publication of session agendas and adopted decisions. The CEC organized two press conferences before Election Day, and five press conferences on Election Day, to inform the public. The CEC provided real-time information on the voter turnout on Election Day and preliminary election results online, which contributed to an increased transparency of the process.

Most legal deadlines were met by the CEC, with the exception of the deadline set forth for the establishment of polling stations abroad due to the delayed examination of complaints related to the issue.

Before the Presidential Elections of 2020, the CEC adopted a decision<sup>13</sup> according to which transportation to polling stations for voting based on agreements with third parties (excluding PwD cases) was considered as a violation. Such a decision was not adopted for these Early Parliamentary Elections. The draft-decision on this matter did not receive a sufficient number of votes from CEC members. ENEMO expresses concerns regarding the lack of regulation on transportation of voters when used as a means for pressuring voters and vote buying.

The CEC and its Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CCET - CICDE) conducted a nationwide voter education campaign and published information related to the electoral process on their websites. The CCET - CICDE produced and broadcasted election educational videos and videos from experts on social networks, while the CEC produced informative videos which were broadcasted mainly in traditional media outlets throughout the election period.

The CEC established a call center<sup>14</sup> for voters, which provided them information on polling stations, voting procedures, etc. The call center's operators offered assistance to lower level EMB members, as well as to individuals responsible for managing the voter lists within Local Public Authorities.

The CEC provided the lower level EMBs with protective equipment against COVID-19. However, on Election Day, the protective measures were not always followed at polling stations observed by ENEMO.

The CEC relied on the instructions<sup>15</sup> issued by the National Extraordinary Public Health Commission (NEPHC - CNESP) regarding the mitigation of public health risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic during elections. However, some measures provided by the NEPHC

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<sup>13</sup> CEC decision Nr. [4390](#) of 20.10.2020 - on some aspects related to the organized transportation of voters to the polling stations on the day of the presidential elections of November 1, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> [https://a.cec.md/ro/astazi-isi-incepe-activitatea-centrul-de-apel-pentru-alegerile-2781\\_99745.html](https://a.cec.md/ro/astazi-isi-incepe-activitatea-centrul-de-apel-pentru-alegerile-2781_99745.html)

<sup>15</sup> [https://gov.md/sites/default/files/hotarirea\\_cnesp\\_nr.56\\_din\\_03.06.2021.pdf](https://gov.md/sites/default/files/hotarirea_cnesp_nr.56_din_03.06.2021.pdf)

instructions were not fully in line with the electoral legislation<sup>16</sup>. Although the discrepancies were not addressed by the CEC, these did not affect the overall Election Day procedures.

Interlocutors voiced an overall confidence in the operation of the State Automated Information System “Elections” (SAIS-E), which was tested before the Election Day and revealed no technical or organizational difficulties.

## **B. District Electoral Councils (DECs)**

37 DECs were established *ad-hoc* for these elections, in accordance with the legal framework<sup>17</sup>, and all the deadlines were met<sup>18</sup>. The work of DECs was generally evaluated as professional and trustworthy by the vast majority of the mission’s interlocutors.

DECs should consist of an odd number of members, at least seven and at most eleven. Most DECs were composed of nine members<sup>19</sup>, except DEC 1 (Municipality of Chisinau) which was composed of eleven members, and DEC 38 (for polling stations established abroad) which was composed of ten members. The CEC did not take the necessary measures to change the composition of DEC 38, which, in violation to the Electoral Code, was composed of an even number of members.

The CEC made nine changes in DECs membership, of which eight replacements and one exclusion. There is no legal deadline after which replacements of DEC members are not allowed. However, replacement of members did not seem to negatively affect the process overall.

DECs displayed all decisions and any other relevant information at designated places at their premises. Several DECs published their decisions on the official webpage of the respective second level administrative unit<sup>20</sup>. All DECs sent their decisions to the CEC on a regular basis. However, ENEMO notes that a dedicated section for the DECs decisions on the CEC webpage, which was an established practice in the last Parliamentary Elections in 2019, was not in place for this election. ENEMO considers this a step back in terms of transparency and providing information to the public.

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<sup>16</sup> According to these instructions, the EMBs chairpersons have the right to replace (Part 2, paragraph 2.1, b) a member of the EMB or an auxiliary staff member, as well as to restrict the access of the visitors (Part 2, paragraph 2.2). In the NEPHC instructions, there is a reference to the voting hours (Part 4, paragraph 4.11) from 08:00 – 21:00, while according to the Electoral Code (Art. 5), the voting on Election Day should start at 07:00. The transfer of the electoral documents and materials will be made by the chairperson of the electoral body accompanied by at most one member (Part 5, paragraph 5.2) according to NEPHC instructions, while according to the Electoral Code, this procedure should be carried out by the chairperson of the PEB along with the police officer and at least two members of the PEB (Art. 63, paragraph (6)).

<sup>17</sup> Art. 28 paragraph (1) and Art. 80 paragraph (1) of the Electoral Code; Points (8) - (9) of the [Regulation](#) on the particularities of the establishment and functioning of polling stations for voters of the Republic of Moldova domiciled in the administrative-territorial units on the left bank of the Dniester (Transnistria), Bender and some localities of Causeni district, approved by the CEC decision Nr. [1567/2018](#).

<sup>18</sup> The CEC established 38 electoral districts on 13.05.2021 (decision Nr. [4836](#)) and 37 DECs on 21.05.2021 (decisions Nr. 4861 – 4897). The CEC has not established a DEC for the Electoral District Nr. 3 (Bender).

<sup>19</sup> [https://a.cec.md/storage/ckfinder/files/C2\\_tabel\\_date%20de%20contact%20a%20CECE%20II.pdf](https://a.cec.md/storage/ckfinder/files/C2_tabel_date%20de%20contact%20a%20CECE%20II.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> DEC 2, Bălți; DEC 4, Anenii Noi; DEC 7, Cahul; DEC 10, Căușeni; DEC 12, Criuleni; DEC 16, Edineț; DEC 17, Fălești; DEC 18, Florești; DEC 20, Hâncești; DEC 22, Leova; DEC 24, Ocnîța; DEC 29, Soroca; DEC 30, Strășeni.

### C. Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs)

2142 polling stations were established within the legal deadline, of which 139 for voters abroad, and 44 for voters from the left bank of the Dniester river. After various amendments by the CEC and court decisions, the total number of polling stations was 2150, of which 150<sup>21</sup> for voters abroad and 41<sup>22</sup> for voters from the left bank of the Dniester river.

ENEMO observers reported that in a few cases, local councils<sup>23</sup> and political parties<sup>24</sup> failed to provide DEC with nominations for PEB candidates. In such instances, the members were nominated by the DEC from the Registry of Electoral Officials.

ENEMO observers reported that few cases of delays were registered in the process of establishment of PEBs and the election of their chairpersons, deputy chairpersons and secretaries, without significantly influencing the integrity of the process.

DECs failed to respect the provision of the Electoral Code regarding the composition of more than two percent of the PEBs on a national scale. Several PEBs had an odd number of members, while few PEBs had more members than provided by the Electoral Code.

Several changes<sup>25</sup> in PEBs composition, mainly due to withdrawal of PEB members as well as scarcity of funds<sup>26</sup>, were reported by ENEMO observers. However, the changes in PEBs composition did not seem to negatively affect the process overall. While the replacement of PEB members was a widespread practice, the updated list of PEBs was not publicly available, as the CEC website shows only their initial composition, affecting transparency when it comes to the composition of lower level commissions.

Information of voters through the distribution of cards containing data regarding the place and time of voting, which was an established practice in previous elections, was generally not conducted by PEBs in these elections, allegedly due to lack of funds. Voter information was left to improvisation by PEB members, which in some cases published the information on social networks, and in several other cases prepared informative posters to be placed in the most frequented places in towns and villages.

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<sup>21</sup> CEC decision Nr. [4966](#) of 05.06.2021 - on the establishment of polling stations abroad for the Early Parliamentary Elections of 11 July, 2021 was amended by decision Nr. [4974](#) of 08.06.2021, and then by decision Nr. [5060](#) of 23.06.2021.

<sup>22</sup> CEC decision Nr. [4965](#) of 5.06.2021 - on the organization of polling stations for voters in the localities on the left bank of the Dniester River (Transnistria), Bender municipality and some localities within the Causeni district for the early parliamentary elections of 11 July, 2021 were amended by decision Nr. [4999](#) of 15.06.2021.

<sup>23</sup> Municipalities of Reci and Radeni from Calarasi, as well as the municipality of Stefan Voda (3 PEBs). The municipality of Chisinau failed to ensure a quorum when the city council had to vote on the project of nominating PEB members, thus leaving the selection of a vast number of members on PEBs.

<sup>24</sup> In DEC 12, Criuleni, political party "Platform Da" failed to submit 38 candidacies. Other political parties did not manage to appoint members in all PEBs due to a lack of representatives, especially in villages.

<sup>25</sup> More than 400 PEB members' replacements were reported by ENEMO observers, mainly in Gagauzia, Cahul, Leova, Balti, Edinet, Soroca, Dubasari, Soldanesti, etc.

<sup>26</sup> DEC 10 – Causeni decreased the membership of three PEBs from 11 to 9 members, due to the scarcity of CEC funds.

Several interlocutors informed ENEMO observers that until a week before Election Day, a number of PEBs were officially opened but still not functional, as their members could not be found at their premises.

Women were well represented in PEBs as reported by ENEMO observers on Election Day, with 85 percent of the total number of members. With regards to managerial positions, 84 percent of the chairpersons, 77 percent of the deputy chairpersons and 97 percent of the secretaries of the observed polling stations were women.

## Registration of voters

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Moldova has a passive voter registration system. The voter lists are compiled by the CEC, based on the State Registry of Voters. Several interlocutors of ENEMO IEOM raised concerns about the accuracy<sup>27</sup> of the voter's lists. Allegedly, they suspected that a large number of the deceased people and those who are no longer in the country are still in the VLs. Despite these suspicions, citizens could easily request the necessary changes to the VLs, which were overall posted within the legal deadline, and were available for voters to consult.

The total number of voters in the main voter lists was 2,786,446, while the total number of voters registered in the State Registry of Voters was 3,282,837<sup>28</sup>. The difference included persons who do not have domicile or residence, including those who have emigrated abroad (237,700 voters) and citizens with the right to vote registered in the administrative-territorial units on the left bank of Dniester (Transnistria, 258,691). Voters from Transnistria and those without a registered address were not included in the main voters list and were recorded in the supplementary voters list on Election day. Although, thanks to the centralized SAISE system, the risks of electoral manipulations were mitigated, the issue of the Voters Registry which did not provided the accurate data on eligible voters actually residing in the country nor personal information updates of Moldovan diaspora – remains a matter which negatively affects the transparency and integrity of the electoral process.

As an exception, at polling stations abroad, voters could vote also with an expired Moldovan passport<sup>29</sup>. The Government decided<sup>30</sup> to establish a deadline for examining the applications for the issuance of ID cards, within one month before Election Day. These applications had to be examined within a reasonable time, but no later than two days before Election Day, regardless of the requested period of service provision. On Election Day, the multifunctional centers of the

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<sup>27</sup> Among other inaccuracies reported by interlocutors, the situation remained unclear regarding the number of voters in A.T.U. Gagauzia, where the national VL includes 130.000 voters, while the registry of voters that is under Gagauzian autonomous government includes 108.000.

<sup>28</sup> [https://a.cec.md/ro/numarul-total-de-alegatori-inscrisi-in-registrul-de-stat-2781\\_99716.html](https://a.cec.md/ro/numarul-total-de-alegatori-inscrisi-in-registrul-de-stat-2781_99716.html)

<sup>29</sup> Point 7, a) of the [Regulation](#) on the voting of citizens of the Republic of Moldova abroad.

<sup>30</sup> Decision Nr [92](#) of 16.06.2021 of the Government.

Public Service Agency<sup>31</sup> ensured the issuance of free of charge temporary ID cards, at the request of voters who did not have a valid identity card. ENEMO positively assessed these decisions that would facilitate the issuance of identification documents in short-timeframes and would enable citizens to participate in elections.

Mobile voting was provided for voters who for health reasons or any other justified reason were unable to vote directly at the polling station, as well as for voters who were homebound or in hospitals, due to COVID-19 context.

## Candidate registration

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Within the legal deadline, 24 electoral contestants, of whom 20 political parties and other socio-political organizations<sup>32</sup>, 2 electoral blocs<sup>33</sup> and 2 independent candidates<sup>34</sup> submitted to the CEC requests to be registered. By 18 June, 23 electoral contestants out of 24 were registered<sup>35</sup>.

The CEC assigned the ranking of the 23 electoral contestants in the ballot based on the date of submission of their requests for registration. If two or more contestants submitted their candidate lists on the same day, the ranking in the ballot was decided upon draw of lots. The CEC refused<sup>36</sup> to register the electoral symbol of the “New Historical Option” Party (Partidul “Noua Opțiune Istorică”), because it was very similar to the symbol of Political Party PAS. As a result, the “New Historical Option” Party was the only electoral contestant in the ballot paper without a symbol.

Fourteen<sup>37</sup> electoral contestants submitted within the legal deadline requests to the CEC to modify their lists, by replacing or excluding certain candidates. While all other requests were approved, the CEC rejected the request of the Party NOI, as one of the candidates that the party requested to include in the lists was not a citizen of the Republic of Moldova.

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<sup>31</sup> <https://bit.ly/3hv00qB>

<sup>32</sup> "Building Europe at Home"; Joint Action Party - Civic Congress; "Șor" party; PAS - Action and Solidarity Party; Professional Movement “Speranța-Nadejda”; Democratic Party of Moldova; Dignity and Truth Platform; National Unity Party; Political Party "Democracy at Home"; "NOI" party; Party for the Development and Consolidation of Moldova; Alliance for the Union of Romanians; Green Ecologist Party; Party of Law and Justice; The "People's Power"; Party of Regions of Moldova; "Patriots of Moldova"; Party of Change; The “New Historical Option”; Labor Party.

<sup>33</sup> Electoral bloc "Renato Usatii"; Electoral bloc of the Communists and Socialists.

<sup>34</sup> Ion Stegărescu; Veaceslav Valico.

<sup>35</sup> The CEC rejected the registration of independent candidate Ion Stegărescu, due to lack of supporters' signatures.

<sup>36</sup> CEC decision Nr. [5041](#) of 22.06.2021.

<sup>37</sup> Electoral bloc "Renato Usatii"; Electoral bloc of the Communists and Socialists; PAS - Action and Solidarity Party; Professional Movement “Speranța-Nadejda”; Political Party “Democracy at Home”; Labor Party; Party of Change; Party for the Development and Consolidation of Moldova; Party of Law and Justice; "Șor" Party; Party of Regions of Moldova; Democratic Party of Moldova; PACE and NOI.

After the latest changes, the total number of candidates for MPs in the lists of electoral blocs, political parties and other socio-political organizations, including the independent candidate was 1791, out of which 959 (53,5 percent) were men and 832 (46.5 percent) were women.

## Electoral Campaign and Campaign Finance

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### A. Electoral Campaign

The legal provisions related to electoral campaigning enshrined in the Electoral Code are mostly in line with international standards. However, a number of standing issues in the electoral legislation remain, *inter alia* leaving space for early campaigning, uneven timeframes for candidate registration and start of the campaigns (affecting equality of opportunity), and excessive bans on use of state symbols and images (affecting freedom of expression).<sup>38</sup>

When it comes to the start of the campaign, ENEMO observed that some competitors were already registered while documents filed to the CEC by some other contestants were still pending, which created space for unequal and different campaigning timeframes, contrary to best practices and affecting equal opportunity to campaign.

Generally, contestants were able to communicate their messages openly and freely to the electorate, and basic freedoms of speech and assembly were upheld. With a variety of competitors reflecting a broad spectrum of political choices, the campaign was competitive overall despite its low visibility until the last two weeks leading to Election Day. Contestants' platforms focused on social and economic issues, the fight against corruption and the country's geopolitical orientation. The most visible political contestants in terms of events and presence on social media were BERU (Renato Usatii Electoral block), Sor party, AUR, PAS and BECS (Socialists and Communists Electoral bloc).

Campaigning was primarily conducted via both traditional and online media, social media platforms<sup>39</sup>, billboards, door-to-door canvassing, distribution of leaflets and flyers (via tents established in the city centers)<sup>40</sup>, and meetings with voters. The state police registered 34 cases of unauthorized display of electoral materials.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> However, it was violated several times during the campaign: AUR was using the Romanian national flag and symbols during the campaign; BECS has used president Putin's decision about Moldovan citizens residing in Russia on the web-page of PSRM; PDM leader Pavel Filip used his pictures with political leaders of the USA, Ukraine, Poland. The [newspaper](#) of PAS, wrote about the history of the party and showed photos of President Sandu.

<sup>39</sup> While PAS, Renato Usatii block, PDM were using mostly Facebook, BECS, relying on the older pro-Russian electorate used Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki more.

<sup>40</sup> PAS, BECS, BeRU, Platform DA were the main parties which had tents in Chisinau.

<sup>41</sup> By BECS, PAS, AUR, BERU, PACE, PUN, Party of Regions, PDM, Joint party-Civic Congress, Sor, Party of Change.

In terms of the impact of COVID-19 on the campaign, most contestants were relying on small-scale meetings/rallies with voters rather than larger rallies due to related restrictions. According to the Ministry of Interior, during the campaign more than 2000 rallies were held with more than 120 000 participants. In most cases, ENEMO observers noted a concerning indifference towards COVID-19 measures. A total of 26 cases were registered by the Police regarding the violation of Public Health restrictions during the meetings of BERU, BECS, PAS, Platforma DA, PDM, AUR, Civic Congress and PACE. The highest number of them (6) were related to AUR meetings, however, ENEMO observers reported that BECS, who held the highest number of meetings, rarely if ever respected health protective measures.

The lack of consistent reaction by public authorities when it comes to enforcing COVID-19 prevention measures is concerning, as are allegations of bias by state institutions towards certain contestants calling into question the principle of equality of electoral contestants in the campaign.

The electoral campaign was marred by negative campaigning and accusations of corruption, in particular towards President Sandu and PAS. ENEMO assesses the campaigning environment as generally peaceful and calm, but radical statements and intolerant messages damaged the image of the campaign. Some of these messages contained russophobic, racial, national<sup>42</sup>, gender, age, and sexual minorities' discriminatory<sup>43</sup> language. To fight discrimination and incitement to hatred, the CEC proposed that the election competitors and the mass media should sign a Code of Conduct<sup>44</sup>, but only seven political parties have signed it.<sup>45</sup>

Campaigning in the Transnistria territory remained limited or almost nonexistent, including in online and social media outlets (few messages, mostly about polling stations opened for residents of Transnistria were observed). These circumstances limited opportunities for Transnistrian voters to make an informed choice on Election Day<sup>46</sup>.

Among the most significant violations observed by the mission during the campaign were some cases of violence<sup>47</sup> and instances of political intimidation. Interlocutors of the mission confirmed

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<sup>42</sup> On 07.06, Mark Tcaciuc, the leader of the *Joint Action Party - Civic Congress*, called the members of the AUR party "unionist-fascists." On 08.07 I.Dodon called them "fascists" and V.Voronin on 05.07 called Igor Grosu the same.

<sup>43</sup> On 19 June, BECS organized a "March in support of the traditional family" in Chisinau, where they brought accusations upon any other form of family than the traditional. The same event was organized in Soroca, both with the presence of Church representatives.

<sup>44</sup> [Cod de Conduita APA2021.pdf \(cec.md\)](#)

<sup>45</sup> Sor Party, PDM, The "Speranța-Надежда" Professional Movement, Green Ecologist Party, Joint Action Party - Civic Congress, Political Party "Party of Law and Justice", Party, "NOI".

<sup>46</sup> AUR tried to enter the Transnistria territory three times, but was stopped by local armed forces (militia). The contestant's right to campaign for voters in the Transnistrian territory was consequently restricted.

<sup>47</sup> The leader of PACE, Vasile Costiuc, was hit with a rubber cane by the guard of a train bridge; The mayor of the village, Mr. Serghei Sapunji, tried to provoke and attack PAS activists a few times; in Causeni, attacks against the head of PSRM territorial organization Oleg Cuciuc were reported. On 12 June during a speech, the AUR candidate mentioned that in Criuleni a person threw a stone at the bus window and broke it. Violeta Ivanov was verbally attacked by several men during a meeting with voters from Boșcana village. AUR leader Dorin Chirtoaka on 4 July in Chisinau allegedly tried to attack V.Voronin and I.Dodon during the march of BECS. The mayor of Sadik village was throwing stones at participants of a PAS meeting. D. Chirtoaka was attacked in Chisinau. In Anenii Noi, campaign activists of BECS faced two attacks: In Mireni a dog was unleashed in their direction and in Cabusca Noua an activist was attacked by spray, as reported by the rayon council head of Anenii Noi.

that PSRM MP Vasile Bollea filed complaints against mayors who are not members of his party, resulting in investigations by the Police and department of anti-corruption. According to these mayors, this was a form of political intimidation and an attempt to discredit them.<sup>48</sup> Besides this case, at least 4 other suspicious cases of intimidation were reported to ENEMO.<sup>49</sup> Cases of damaged campaign materials were observed as well.<sup>50</sup>

Public institutions are obliged to guarantee equality of opportunity to parties and candidates alike during the electoral campaign. This consists of a neutral attitude by central and local institutions during their institutional activities.<sup>51</sup> In this regard, the Electoral Code offers certain safeguards prohibiting the use of office and administrative resources with an electoral aim.<sup>52</sup>

ENEMO raises concerns regarding the biased behavior of some local public authorities' representatives who were involved in campaigning and were favouring certain candidates. At least 6 cases of their involvement into campaign activities were observed by the mission<sup>53</sup>. Besides, the misuse of administrative resources took the form of visits to public institutions by

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<sup>48</sup>As a reaction, the Association of Mayors in Causeni wrote a letter addressed to the CEC, Supreme Investigative Court and General Inspectorate concerning pressure by Mr. Bolea against local mayors, which was signed by 16 mayors including one PSRM mayor.

<sup>49</sup> Cahul district, Electoral Bloc "Renato Usati" representative claimed to be illegally followed by the Police. AUR bus in Gagauzia was intimidated to leave during the campaigning event as they were not welcomed by locals. In Calarasi, beneficiaries of Sor shops claimed they were threatened that they would be deprived of their membership cards if they would not vote for the party.

<sup>50</sup> Several PACE party posters were destroyed in Rispopeni, in Soldanesti district and another one was stolen. In Alexandresti village (Riscani District) PAS materials were glued above "Civic Congress" ones on an informational board. In Causeni, activists of the Democratie acasa damaged electoral materials of BECS. Overall, the police registered 9 cases of damaging electoral materials.

<sup>51</sup> Venice Commission, Opinion No. 190/2002, "Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters".

<sup>52</sup> Article 52, para. 7 of the Electoral Code.

<sup>53</sup> On 23 June, Nikolai Grigorishin, mayor of Balti, held a campaign meeting for BERU at the Theoretical Lyceum in Balti. On the same day along with BERU's candidates he participated in the meeting held with residents of St. Independents, 102, in Balti. On 24 June, he also held a meeting in Gymnasium No. 7 and expressed one of BERU's promises about school funding. On 05.07 In Donduseni the President of the District Council, Valentin Cebotari, accompanied Igor Dodon at the campaign concert. On 11.07 the mayor of Borogani village, from Leova district, Elena Savitski was campaigning for PDM. On 12.06 Constantin Cojocari, Mayor of Edinet municipality, held an outdoor meeting in Edinet and expressed his support to Platform DA. On 28.06, the mayor of Capriana village, from Strasen district, Ion Scutaru, was campaigning for PDM. On 05.07 in Regina Maria commune, Soroca district, the mayor of this village Oleg Nastas urged everyone to vote for PDM as well as the mayor of Schineni commune, Soroca district, Silvia Leşan. However, ENEMO interlocutors mentioned allegations that PDM mayors were informed how to campaign legally in their free time and that this does not constitute a violation. The acting mayor of Cimislia was campaigning openly for political party DA on social media (Facebook).

some contestants<sup>54</sup> and campaigning in municipal enterprises.<sup>55</sup> The state police registered 4 cases of prevention of meetings of PAS (3)<sup>56</sup> and AUR (1) by local public authorities.

Additionally, cases of taking credit for work/services carried out with public funds by municipal administrations because of the party they support were observed<sup>57</sup> as well as the involvement of church representatives in the campaign.

The mission was informed of several suspected cases of vote buying, in the techniques used and observed in previous elections in Moldova.<sup>58</sup>

## **B. Campaign Finance**

Electoral contestants were obliged to open a designated bank account entitled "Electoral Fund" and all campaign donations and expenditures had to be carried out via this bank account. The CEC established the general ceiling of the financial means that can be transferred to the "Electoral Fund" account of a contestant in these elections in the amount of 20,707 lei. Electoral contestants not opening a bank account designated for campaign funds were required to inform the CEC within three days from the date of their registration as contestants. In that case, they had to carry out campaign activities without financial expenditures.

Most registered parties and blocs opened official bank accounts for their electoral funds (18 out of 23). Some parties informed the CEC that they would not open an Electoral Fund bank account as

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<sup>54</sup> In Calarasi, Ms Monica Babuc (former Minister of Education of Moldova and PDM member) organized a meeting with high school teachers in the school facility during the working hours. The staff of some local municipalities of Calarasi were participating at the rallies of PDM during working hours. On June 24, PDM had a meeting in the republic hospital during the workday with the staff. Sor party in Orhei region was openly campaigning in public institutions during all the campaign period.

<sup>55</sup> On June 1, Leader Pavel Filip (PDM) spoke with employees of the Chisinau trolleybus company. Municipal Enterprises: "The Balti Trolleybus Depot", "The Balti Market Association" and the planting enterprise "Bio" are involved in BERU election campaign - advertising materials of the BERU are placed inside city markets buildings and inside public transport.

<sup>56</sup> Additionally, ENEMO interlocutors mentioned that Orhei LPA does not allow the PAS party to organize the meetings in public spaces.

<sup>57</sup> On May 26 in Anenii Noi, Igor Dodon praised the party councilors for buying oxygen stations for the hospital, while they were purchased by the rayon council funds, headed by PSRM. According to Renato Usatii, 600 square meters of paving slabs in front of the Balti city hospital were purchased at his own expense. However, earlier the Balti city took a bank loan for 60 000 000 MDL and 35 000 000 of which have already been spent on the work similar to what Usatii said he had done for personal money.

The Head of PAS regional branch in Balti and MP Candidate Boris Marcoci attributed to their party the reconstruction of the Konev str. in Balti. In fact, a huge amount of 12 000 000 MDL from the city budget was allocated for the repair work of a street 200 m long.

<sup>58</sup> Allegations include social shops by Sor in Orhei, Besarabasca, Cimislia, and Cantemir. All customers are in Sor's list of (possible) voters and receive different presents (in the bag without logo). Sor in Moscow (Russia) is offering 1000 rubles for the vote.

they did not plan to have any expenses during the campaign.<sup>59</sup> Some parties opened their bank account Electoral Fund with delays.<sup>60</sup>

The highest income and expenditures among the contestants belonged to Renato Usatii's Electoral bloc, most of which were spent on TV campaign advertising. The second and third place in terms of money expenditures were the BECS and PAS, respectively.

The CEC had a legal obligation to perform prior review of the reports on electoral campaign financing in terms of completeness of information and compliance with the requirements of the law. Reports on funding of electoral campaigns for the entire electoral period had to be submitted by registered electoral competitors to the CEC no later than two days prior to Election Day.

In general, competitors submitted financial reports as prescribed, although some parties had to subsequently file corrected reports.<sup>61</sup> The CEC published these reports on the website, mostly according to the deadlines.<sup>62</sup> However, CEC representatives raised concerns about the lack of legal mechanisms and resources to examine sources of donations and their correlation with the income declared by donors (concerns are related to the verification of sources of donations from abroad, and a lack of comprehensive methodology to evaluate in-kind donations), which is at odds with international standards.<sup>63</sup>

In the context of examining the reports on campaign financing, the CEC sent the list of individual donors to the State Tax Service to verify the sources of origin of the donations, which can be assessed as a positive step towards increasing transparency. The examination of domestic donations by the CEC revealed that some of the donors had less yearly revenues than the amount donated to the respective electoral contestant, which is reason for concern.

Electoral competitors are responsible for the content of electoral advertising materials distributed or published<sup>64</sup>. This is in line with principles enshrined in international standards.<sup>65</sup> However, some parties failed to indicate publication data clearly and fully on their electoral materials, which raises concerns regarding hidden funding used for publishing of these materials.<sup>66</sup>

Most of the interviewed regional party representatives pointed out that no monetary compensation was provided to volunteers. Reportedly, regional campaign managers were also working for free, even though for many of them the engagement in campaign activities represents a full-time job. The latter raises concern regarding hidden and non-transparent remuneration in the frame of those

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<sup>59</sup> 5 electoral contestants informed about the non-opening of an account.

<sup>60</sup> NOI (has been denied by a number of banks before successful opening of the account), PUN, Party of Law and Justice, Party of Regions, Party of Workers; political party PACE had problems with opening an account, as the EXIMBANK was delaying the process, which led to further delays in the start of their campaign.

<sup>61</sup> 191 financial reports have been received (of which 82 were due to corrections) to 10.07.2021

<sup>62</sup> [Sustinerea financiară | \(cec.md\)](https://cec.md)

<sup>63</sup> Venice Commission, Opinion No. 190/2002, "Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters", Art. 108.

<sup>64</sup> Each electoral advertisement must contain the name of the electoral contestant, the date of issue, the print run of the material and the name of the printing house that printed it, Article 70 of the Electoral Code.

<sup>65</sup> Venice Commission, Opinion No. 190/2002, "Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters", Art. 108.

<sup>66</sup> ENEMO observers noticed at least 3 [billboards](#) of BECS that had no release information encrypted. Also, the Platforma DA and BeRU tents did not have information about release in Chisinau.

parties' campaigns. The engagement of minors (persons under 18) was reported to the mission, whose work was also declared as "voluntary".<sup>67</sup>

Several investigative articles about Russian financial and political technology interference in the Moldovan elections in support of PSRM were also published in the media during the campaign period.<sup>68</sup>

Overall, a lack of legal mechanisms which could enable the CEC to comprehensively monitor campaign expenses and financial reports, as well as cases of non-respect of the law by electoral contestants, negatively affected the general transparency of campaign finance. Furthermore, this lack of transparency constrains the scope of available information for voters to exercise an informed choice.

## Media

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### A. Media Environment<sup>69</sup>

Overall, the media landscape in Moldova is pluralistic and polarized with a lack of independence from political interests. While most traditional media are accessible online, television is still the main source of information followed by online and social media. Television includes thirteen national channels, thirty-seven regional channels mainly addressing national communities and eleven local media providers.

The media market is dominated by individuals affiliated to political parties, which raised concerns among some of the mission's media interlocutors, especially due to the support given to some Moldovan media outlets by companies allegedly close to the Kremlin, thus potentially influencing the campaign.

Despite significantly declining circulation rates of print media, newspapers remained influential online, particularly at the local level. Furthermore, portals jurnal.md (30 percent), protv.md (27 percent), publika.md (16 percent), point.md, stiri.md and zdg.md (10 - 11 percent) are also sources of political information, as well as radio stations, two national, forty-one local and twelve regional.

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<sup>67</sup> "Young Guards" used by BECS.

<sup>68</sup> [Bild: "Kremlin invested almost 11.5 million euros to make Igor Dodon the president of Moldova." Socialists denied the accusations - Moldova.org](#)  
[#OperationMorkovka: Moscow finances pro-Russian parties in Moldova - EU Reporter](#)  
[Putin und seine Tricks: So könnte Russland die Bundestagswahl 2021 sabotieren - Politik Inland - Bild.de](#)

<sup>69</sup> The mission did not conduct media monitoring activities. Findings and conclusions in this section are drawn from meetings with interlocutors that work in the media field in Moldova and monitoring of the activity of the body in charge of monitoring media conduct (Audiovisual Coordinating Council).

In June 2021, about two-thirds of the adult population accessed social networks daily and about a third read news sites or listened to the radio.<sup>70</sup>

## B. Media Legal Framework

Even though the Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the legal framework provides for general media freedom, ENEMO raises concerns regarding recent cases of journalists facing threats of violence and intimidation.<sup>71</sup>

According to mission interlocutors, the Audiovisual Council (AC) responsible for monitoring the implementation of provisions on election campaigns in the media, did not effectively perform and was unable to apply swift sanctions to broadcasters which violated provisions of the legal framework. The AC presented its first, and only, by-weekly monitoring report on 30 June 2021, for the period 12 - 25 June 2021.<sup>72</sup> According to findings, most of the monitored broadcasters had not violated provisions on the coverage of the election campaign, except for Primul în Moldova, NTV Moldova, TV6 and 10 TV which did not submit the Declaration on editorial policy in the election campaign, and thus had no right to broadcast news on the subject. 10 TV was sanctioned with 10,000 Lei for violating the provisions of the broadcasting license and received two public warnings, for violating the provision of correct information to the public and for failure to interpret the message in sign language. Furthermore, the proposals to sanction NTV Moldova, Primul în Moldova and TV6 television stations for not presenting a balanced campaign did not meet the required number of votes by members of the AC. Several interlocutors doubted the fairness of sanctioning by the AC, noting that they are not perceived as independent from political power and lack public trust.

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<sup>70</sup> [https://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Raport-BOP-2021\\_.pdf](https://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Raport-BOP-2021_.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> The representative of the Party of Regions, Alexandr Kalinin, insulted the presenter of the ProTV television station, during the [28 June electoral debates](#). The television station announced to the [CEC that the candidate will no longer be able to participate in the debates and that the party may delegate another representative](#). Furthermore, [journalists of the nordnews.md portal were abruptly reprimanded by the BECS representatives](#), implicitly by the candidate for the position of deputy, Alexandr Nesterovschi from Balti. They were not allowed to participate in the meeting with voters that Igor Dodon had on July 7, 2021. ENEMO was informed that Alexandr Nesterovschi had aggressive behavior during the election campaign against journalists. Another case reported to ENEMO happened at the beginning of June. The [reporter of Ziarul de Garda was threatened by a forester who was targeted in an investigation](#). Also, the mayor of [Taraclia V. Lupov launched numerous attacks on the tuk.md portal](#), intimidating journalists and insulting them. On 6 July, at the electoral meeting of Vadim Fotescu, candidate of the "Șor" party with the inhabitants of Taraclia, the mayor Veaceslav Lupov again attacked journalists of the TUK.md portal, insulting them and threatening to publish material proving his allegations.

<sup>72</sup> During reported period, the main news bulletins of the television and radio stations were monitored: "Moldova-1" (19:00); "Radio Moldova" (17:00); "Primul in Moldova" (18:00); "TVR Moldova" (18:00); "Prime" (21:00); "TV8" (19:00); "Public TV" (17:00); "NTV Moldova" (19:00); "CHANNEL 2" (19:00); "CHANNEL 3" (20:00); "TV 6" (19:00); "TV Journal" (19:00); "PRO TV CHISINAU" (19:00); "RTR Moldova" (19:00); "BTV" (19:00) and "10 TV" (20:00)

There is a lack of oversight of campaign and media reporting related to elections. Additionally, despite being obliged by the Electoral Code,<sup>73</sup> the AC did not submit to the CEC, two days prior to Election Day, the summary report on monitoring the conduct of the media during the campaign.

Moreover, the AC has the obligation to examine and address petitions and notifications about the conduct of broadcasters during the campaign.<sup>74</sup> During the electoral period, domestic CSOs and individuals filed notifications to the AC on biased conduct of broadcasters, in favor of the BECS<sup>75</sup>. The AC dismissed all of them.

After candidates are registered by the CEC, paid campaign advertising is allowed in the media in accordance with the Regulation on the coverage of the electoral campaign and has to be clearly marked as such. Several ENEMO interlocutors reported that throughout the campaign, paid advertisements were not used by parties as expected. However, there are cases reported by the CSOs<sup>76</sup> of some media not clearly marking content, thus not being able to differentiate journalistic content from advertising in order to avoid misleading voters and not providing realistic information on political platforms.

In line with the law, free airtime is allocated to all electoral contestants, including equality of media coverage and access to election debates. According to many ENEMO interlocutors, debates were difficult to organize due to the schedule of debates broadcasting, as well as the media's inability to communicate with political party representatives or candidates, especially at the local level. Many ENEMO media interlocutors complained about significant difficulties with relevant contacts of the political parties' representatives or candidates. First debates took place on 15 - 17 June<sup>77</sup>, while most TV stations launched the round of debates on 21 - 22 June<sup>78</sup>, and some media providers organized debates during the weekend<sup>79</sup>. Additionally, some ENEMO interlocutors expressed disappointments about the conditions created by the CEC and the AC for the media and voters. According to them, the bar for the debates was considerably lowered in terms of the profile of some candidates who disregarded the rules, the moderator, the viewers and had inappropriate behaviour. This affected the ability of voters to make an informed choice due to a lack of access to objective and diverse information.

All candidates were able to campaign freely and freedom of speech was respected. However, many ENEMO interlocutors voiced concerns that the campaign environment was affected by

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<sup>73</sup> [Art 70, p. 12 of the Electoral Code](#).

<sup>74</sup> Art. 75, p. 4 c of Audiovisual Media Services Code.

<sup>75</sup> 23 June, 2021, two notifications no. 41/ICJ and 42/ICJ 2. Also, the Public Association "Center for Independent Journalism" submitted to the AC notification no. 02/ICJ of the same date, informing about the results of the monitoring of some media service providers in terms of coverage of the electoral campaign; 29 June, 2021, two petitions no. 1/NTV and no. 3/PÎMD of the same date from Mrs. Cristina Durnea.

<sup>76</sup> Association for Free Press, [third Monitoring Report](#).

<sup>77</sup> Radio Vocea Basarabiei, Radio Media, Drochia FM, Drochia TV, Jurnal TV, Vocea Basarabiei TV, Cotidianul TV-CTV.

<sup>78</sup> Moldova 1, Pro-TV Chisinau, TVR Moldova, TV 8, TV Gagauzia, Elita TV, Studio L, TV6, Studio L, Canal Regional, etc.

<sup>79</sup> Prime TV, Publika TV, Canal 2, Canal 3 held the electoral debate on Saturday and Sunday, 19 - 20 June and 26 - 27 June, 2021.

disinformation tactics, instances of negative campaigning, intolerant rhetoric and hate speech.<sup>80</sup> Additionally, some political parties are allegedly using a new instrument for voter manipulation by buying fake polls to possibly influence election results.

As a positive development, some representatives of regional and local media informed ENEMO about cooperating directly with the CEC on a daily basis and evaluated the cooperation as sufficiently open and supportive.

### **C. Online and social media**

Given the increasing influence of numerous online media and social networks on the campaign coverage, many interlocutors expressed concern over dissemination of false information impacting the election results. Since Moldovan legislation does not contain any provisions that are directly applicable to online and social media, it should be noted that on 1 July 2021, Facebook started its expanded partnership with AFP<sup>81</sup> to help tackle misinformation on its platforms prior to the elections.

ENEMO used the CrowdTangle platform to monitor the activities of political parties as well as media on Facebook. During the electoral campaign, ENEMO monitored 18 pages of political parties which used social networks and online space to spread political content. The total number of content, within this period, published by political parties on Facebook was 3080 out of which individually, BERU (Renato Usatii Electoral bloc) had 345 posts, PAS – 334, Joint Action Party - Civic Congress - 323, PACE - 282, Democratic Party of Moldova 248, BECS 235, Political Party "Democracy at Home" - 231, Sor party 185, Platforma DA - 161, National Unity Party - 128, Party for the Development and Consolidation of Moldova - 120, Green Ecologist Party - 112, AUR - 111, The "People's Power" - 85, Party of the Law and Justice - 81, Party of Change - 53, The "New Historical Option" - 46, Patriots of Moldova - 0.

A total of 1.96 million Facebook interactions were made on the mentioned posts, out of which as much as 1.15 million were only from the "Democracy at Home" Party and 424,2 thousand from PAS.

Parties communicated mostly through photos (35.68 percent), videos (35.19 percent) and Facebook live (17.03 percent).

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<sup>80</sup> It was reported to ENEMO that hate speech towards women based on gender occurred during the political meeting of the Socialist in Basarabasca; BECS in their newspapers "Balti News" continued disinformation and negative campaign against BERU (Renato Usatii Electoral Bloc and Renato Usatii personally) and PAS representatives.

<sup>81</sup> AFP is certified through the non-partisan [International Fact-Checking Network](#) (IFCN). For the month of July 2021 it will fact-check content posted on Facebook and Instagram in Moldova.

## Gender Representation

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The existing legal framework establishes relevant regulations for promoting women participation in public and political life.<sup>82</sup> For increasing the representation of women in the parliament the legislation sets forth that electoral contestants submitting candidate lists should ensure 40 percent representation of both sexes. As a result of 2019 Parliamentary elections there are only 24 women in the legislature, including the Speaker of the Parliament being a woman. After parliamentary elections in 2019, an additional requirement was introduced for ensuring better representation of women. According to it, among every ten candidates there should be at least four candidates of both sexes. If the gender quota requirement is not respected, the list will not be registered. These two requirements in conjunction with the fully proportional electoral system can ensure higher representation of women in the legislature. However, the lack of regulation in case of withdrawal of a mandate by a female MP that enables replacement of a female MP with a male remains an issue.

When it comes to practice, problems related to women empowerment, promotion of their rights and gender equality were not widely addressed by electoral contestants in these elections. Only a few political parties – PAS, Ecologist Green Party - raised issues related to strengthening women. At the same time, during the election campaign there were messages based on gender stereotypes and prejudices.<sup>83</sup> ENEMO considers that this type of campaigning is unacceptable, does not contribute to the healthy electoral environment and strengthens gender discrimination.

It should be noted that women were well represented in all PEBs observed by ENEMO, with 85 percent of PEB members being women, as well as in leadership positions (84 percent of PEB chairpersons, 77 percent of deputy chairpersons and 97 percent of secretaries were women).

## National Minorities

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According to Article 1 of the Law on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and on the Legal Status of their Organizations, persons belonging to national minorities are persons residing on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, have Moldovan citizenship, possess ethical, cultural and linguistic features that differ from the majority of the population (Moldovans) and

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<sup>82</sup> Republic of Moldova is a party to international treaties protection and promoting the right of women for instance, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Convention on the Political Rights of Women. It has also adopted the Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

<sup>83</sup> Some of those messages were also directed against President Sandu and female journalist.

consider themselves to be of a different ethnical origin.<sup>84</sup> This definition, as well as the law are in line with the international standards.<sup>85</sup>

The current legislation guarantees all citizens the equal right to vote and to be elected regardless of ethnicity or proficiency in the official language.

The Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CICDE) organized trainings for EMB members and conducted voter education activities in state language as well as in Russian language. Also, 682, 698 ballot papers were printed in Russian.<sup>86</sup> The DEC 36 of ATU Gagauzia was publishing its decisions mainly in Russian language.

During the election campaign ethnic minorities' issues were not addressed by the contestants.

## **Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**

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The legal framework of the Republic of Moldova is in conformity with international standards guaranteeing among other rights, the right to be engaged in public and political life, to be elected and to elect.<sup>87</sup> Regardless of this, full engagement of PWDs in the electoral process remains an issue of concern.

The CEC prepared voter education materials for promoting the involvement of PWDs in elections, also provided PEBs with magnifying lenses, ballot frames in Braille and special booths. CCET-CICDE provided information to the mission that at the occasion of trainings, members of the PEBs received information about assisting PWDs. However, ENEMO interlocutors considered the measures taken as insufficient, with for instance, polling stations not having sign marks for orientation.

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring accessibility of polling stations. According to ENEMO observers, on Election Day 31 percent of observed polling stations were accessible; 31 percent required minor assistance and 38 percent were inaccessible. The number of properly accessible polling stations remains a problem. There is a deeply rooted assumption that

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<sup>84</sup> According to the census of 2014 there are following national minorities in Moldova: Ukrainian -6.6%; Gagauz - 4.6%; Russian-4.1%; Bulgarians -1.9%; Roma-0.3%; others-0.5%. <https://bit.ly/36bEi4O>

<sup>85</sup> [According to United Nations' International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 2020](#), the legal and institutional framework of Moldova for the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of members of ethnic minorities, is regularly amended to bring it into line with international standards, national priorities and the country's aspirations for European integration. Particular emphasis is given to the implementation of human rights agreements to which the Republic of Moldova is a party.

<sup>86</sup> CEC decision Nr. [5062](#) of 25.06.2021.

<sup>87</sup> Republic of Moldova has ratified the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPwD) in 2010 and its Optional Protocol was signed in 2018. There is also the Law on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2012 and the CEC Regulation on Ensuring Access to the Voting Process for Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2016.

inaccessible polling stations are not an issue, and in that case PWDs can vote by requesting the use of the mobile ballot box. ENEMO assesses that this approach does not contribute to more active involvement of PWDs in elections.

During the election campaign electoral contestants did not address the needs and problems of persons with disabilities, nor did the mission observe any particular campaign messages encouraging PWDs to participate in the elections. Contestants are not obliged to use sign language for any types of electoral materials. Only two contestants -PAS and PUN- have published electoral programs/materials in Braille. Also, PAS conducted a meeting with voters having vision impairment.

## Complaints and Appeals

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According to the electoral legislation complaints can be filed by voters and contestants against EMBs and electoral contestants. Complaints against contestants and the CEC should be lodged directly to the courts. The decision of the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) is final.

Monitoring of the adjudication of complaints revealed a number of problems. Legal deadlines for considering complaints are long, which does not ensure that alleged violations are addressed in a timely-manner.<sup>88</sup> Protracted adjudication of complaints created uncertainty regarding crucial aspects of elections. For instance, adjudication of complaints regarding the number of the polling stations abroad was one of the politically controversial issues that took more than ten days. Also, one of the important complaints concerned the organization of polling stations for voters in the localities on the left bank of the Dniester. The complaint was filed by the PPPDA on 7 June requesting the Court of Appeal to annul CEC decision no. 4965 on 5 June. The Court of Appeal rendered a decision after one month, on 8 July, stating that the number of polling stations for voters from Transnistria should not exceed 12. Delivering a decision on one of the key issues with such a delay, only two days before the elections, created misunderstandings and uncertainty that could damage the integrity of the electoral process. Taking into account political tensions around the issue, it can also raise questions regarding the impartiality of the court. The decision of the Court of Appeals was overturned by the SCJ on 10 July.

Another problem was related to the misunderstanding over the competent body to adjudicate complaints.<sup>89</sup> In one of the cases, the CEC found the complaint inadmissible on the ground that the complainant could not prove that his/her right as a voter was violated. The same reasoning was

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<sup>88</sup> For instance, complaints filed against the CEC should be examined within five days.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, in case of BECS v. PAS regarding the abuse of state resources the CEC considered the complaint inadmissible stating that it should have been submitted to the court as it concerned electoral contestant, but both Court of Appeal and SCJ ruled that the CEC was competent to examine the complaint. In case of PPPDA against CEC decision No.4965 of 05/06/21, Chisinau Court of Appeal rejected the appeal as inadmissible indicating that the contestant has not followed the mandatory procedure and has not submitted an initial complaint/request to the CEC, while the SCJ annulled the decision of the Court of Appeal and returned the case for re-examination.

used by the court of both instances, while the Electoral Code does not establish this requirement. In some cases, both the CEC and the courts used a formalistic approach to reject complaints. This contradicts the principle of an effective system of appeal enshrined in the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters.<sup>90</sup>

Based on the above, ENEMO considers that the long deadlines for examining complaints, as well as unclear regulations concerning the competent body for adjudicating complaints and the right of standing do not ensure the right to an effective remedy.

As of 8 July, there were 13 complaints filed with the CEC out of which one was satisfied; two referred to other competent authorities; three pending examinations and five declared inadmissible and two rejected. In total, 19 appeals were submitted both to the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. Out of these seven were partially satisfied; two satisfied; five rejected; five declared inadmissible.

In the process of analyzing the complaints submitted to the courts, it was observed that it is difficult to navigate through the national portal of justice (<https://instante.justice.md>) and find all the decisions in respect of election related complaints. The court website has multiple windows and sections and does not have complete information on the examined cases in electoral matters.

Besides filing complaints, the Electoral Code envisages the possibility of submitting notifications to EMBs regarding identified irregularities. For the examination of notifications, the CEC applied a general deadline of 30 days which is a very long timeframe. In practice, some of the notifications were examined faster, but at the discretion of the CEC. As stated by the representative of the CEC, usually notifications do not contain sufficient information for establishing violation. As of 8 July, there were 11 notifications submitted to the CEC.<sup>91</sup> According to the information available, out of these one notification was transferred to the competent authority, on five notifications the CEC issued a response and the rest were pending.

The Contravention Code establishes administrative liability for election related violations.<sup>92</sup> According to the information provided by the General Inspectorate of Police, as of 8 July, the police received information and started an investigation on 118 alleged violations.<sup>93</sup> Out of these cases one was transferred to another competent body, in 16 cases the investigation was terminated because of the lack of misdemeanor, while the rest of the cases are still under investigation. ENEMO considers that election-related violations should be investigated in short-timeframes in order to ensure a fair and healthy electoral environment.

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<sup>90</sup> [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), II.3.3. Venice Commission, 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Four were submitted by the political parties, one by MP, four by the citizens.

<sup>92</sup> Articles 47-53 establish liability for violations such as prevention of the exercise of the electoral right; failure to execute the CEC summon; impediment of the activity of the electoral body; enrolment in several lists of candidates; unauthorized display, production and/or dissemination of election campaign materials; electoral campaigning on the day of election or the day before elections; violation by members of the electoral body, etc.

<sup>93</sup> 26 recorded cases regarding violations of COVID-19 prevention measures during the meetings; 4 cases of interference and blockage of the organized meetings with the voters – by the Local Public Authority; 34 offences regarding the display of electoral materials; 9 cases of damaging electoral materials; 9 cases related to the electoral campaign (ex: in unauthorized places); 36 cases regarding other violations (insult, hooliganism, drunkenness, etc.)

## Election Day

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On Election Day, ENEMO deployed 14 observers to follow the process of preparation and opening of polling stations, the voting and counting process, as well as the transfer and intake of election materials by DECs. ENEMO observers monitored the opening procedures in 10 polling stations, voting in 158 polling stations, closing and counting in 10 polling stations. Additionally, ENEMO observed the intake of election materials and tabulation of results in 10 DECs. In total, ENEMO observed Election Day procedures in 158 out of 2000 in country polling stations, which represents 7,9 percent of the total number of polling stations in Moldova.

### A. Opening procedures

ENEMO observers reported on opening procedures at 10 polling stations, which were all assessed positively, including their surrounding environment. However, 2 out of the 10 observed polling stations were open without full presence of PEB members<sup>94</sup>.

The opening procedures were assessed as transparent in 9 of the 10 observed polling stations. All stationary and mobile ballot boxes were sealed in accordance with procedures.

All observed polling stations opened on time (by 7 AM). Observed polling stations were equipped with all essential materials<sup>95</sup> needed for voting at the moment of opening.

The setup of all observed polling stations was assessed as adequate. PEBs generally conducted the opening in an orderly manner and according to the prescribed procedures. No complaints related to the opening procedures were filed in any of the observed polling stations.

However, observers noticed that COVID-19 protective measures<sup>96</sup> were not fully respected in 6 out of 10 polling stations observed.

### B. Voting process

ENEMO observers assessed the process of voting in 158 polling stations throughout the Election Day. Overall, the voting process was assessed positively, with few minor irregularities in a number of polling stations.

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<sup>94</sup> In one observed polling station, 5 out of 11 members were absent during the opening procedures, while in another observed polling station 3 out of 11 members were absent.

<sup>95</sup> Ballot papers, voter lists, ballot boxes, voting booths, camera, stamps needed for the voting ("Alegeri parlamentare anticipate 11.07.2021", 'Votat', 'Retras', 'Anulat'), PEB number stamp, computers of SAIS-E, protocols, masks, gloves, face shields and hand sanitizers.

<sup>96</sup> Face shields and gloves were not being worn in 40 percent of the observed polling stations.

The most concerning irregularities were observed in one polling station designated to voters residing in Transnistria, in Rezina, and at one of the polling stations in A.T.U. Gagauzia. In both polling stations ENEMO observed indications of organized transportation of voters<sup>97</sup>.

The environment around polling stations was assessed as regular in 95 percent of polling stations observed, while at 3 percent of polling stations observers noticed the presence of campaign materials<sup>98</sup>, and at 2 percent an indication of organized transportation of voters and large groups of voters in front of the polling station.

The setup of 99 percent of polling stations was assessed as acceptable, while all essential materials were present in all of the observed polling stations. At all polling stations observed, stationary ballot boxes were properly sealed, while 2 percent of mobile ballot boxes were not properly sealed.

Not all PEB members seemed to be aware of the modalities of using video cameras during Election day. Only in 92 percent of observed polling stations observers noticed that the camera was recording during the voting process.

All observed polling stations were operating with the presence of a minimum required number of PEB members, as per the Law. Women were well represented in all PEBs, with 85 percent of PEB members being women, as well as in leadership positions within the PEB (84 percent of PEB chairpersons, 77 percent of deputy chairpersons and 97 percent of secretaries were women) at polling stations observed.

COVID-19 protective measures were not fully respected at 25 percent of the observed polling stations<sup>99</sup>.

Voter identification procedures were followed properly in 98 percent of the observed polling stations, while in 2 percent<sup>100</sup> ballots were issued without checking the voters in the SAIS-E system. At 8 percent of observed polling stations, the secrecy of voting was violated to some extent, mostly due to inadequate set up of voting booths, or more than one person in the voting booth.

Observers assessed that PEBs managed the voting process properly and functioned in an orderly manner in 97 percent of the observed polling stations, while 3 percent of polling stations observed

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<sup>97</sup> In polling station 37/36, Rezina, 2 cars were continuously transporting voters to one of the polling stations established for Transnistrian voters. A similar situation happened in polling station 36/37, in A.T.U. Gagauzia, where large groups of voters were also observed in front of the polling station.

<sup>98</sup> In one polling station in DEC 9, Calarasi and in three polling stations in Straseni.

<sup>99</sup> At 15 percent of observed polling stations, PEB members were not wearing face shields and at 10 percent not all PEB members were wearing gloves.

<sup>100</sup> Ballots were issued without checking in SAIS-E due to temporary failure of internet connection in one polling station in DEC 26, Rezina, and in one polling station in DEC 37, for voters from the left bank of the Dniester river. The names and ID numbers of voters were noted, with an explanation by PEB members that those would be added to the SAIS-E system when the internet connection would be restored.

were somehow crowded. At almost all (97 percent) observed polling stations, no presence of unauthorized persons<sup>101</sup> was reported by observers.

31 percent of polling stations observed during voting were assessed as accessible for persons with locomotor disabilities, while 31 percent of polling stations required minor assistance and 38 percent were assessed as not accessible.

PEBs were evaluated by observers as either “good”<sup>102</sup> or “very good”<sup>103</sup> in all observed polling stations.

### **C. Counting process**

ENEMO followed the closing and vote-counting procedures at 10 polling stations. All observed polling stations closed in time, and no voter queues were reported in any of them at the moment of closing.

All PEBs at observed polling stations were operating with enough members and no replacement of PEB members, nor SAIS-E operators happened during the day.

The counting process started on time at all polling stations observed. Video cameras were properly positioned and recording at all observed polling stations during the counting process. At nine out of ten observed polling stations, counting procedures were followed properly and protocols were filled out in accordance with the law<sup>104</sup>.

The presence of a member from another PEB was noticed in one observed polling station during the counting, and a person who was not a PEB member helped with packing materials in another polling station. All observers present were able to observe, and copies of protocols were given to all entitled individuals in all polling stations observed. No formal complaints were submitted at polling stations observed during the counting.

Protective measures were respected by all entitled persons in one out of ten observed polling stations<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> In one case, in DEC 5, Basarabeasca, the unjustified presence of a police officer was observed, while in 5 cases people without proper identification badges were present in polling stations: 2 cases in DEC 23, Nisporeni, 2 cases in DEC 16, Edinet and 1 case in DEC 2, Balti.

<sup>102</sup> 72 percent of observed polling stations.

<sup>103</sup> 28 percent of observed polling stations.

<sup>104</sup> In one case unused ballots were not counted.

<sup>105</sup> In nine out of ten polling stations, social distance was not respected; in eight out of ten polling stations individuals were not wearing protective masks properly; and in three out of ten polling stations individuals were not using hand sanitizers.

At all observed polling stations, election materials were packed and sealed in accordance with the law, without substantial deviation from the procedures. The assessment of PEBs during the counting was either “very good”<sup>106</sup> or “good”<sup>107</sup> in all observed polling stations.

#### **D. Transfer of materials to district election commissions (DEC) and DEC activity**

ENEMO observers monitored the transfer of election materials and respective intake at 10 DECs. The transfer of materials was done in an orderly manner and following the procedures in all polling stations in which ENEMO observed this process.

In all observed DECs, authorized observers were able to observe properly, and eight out of ten DECs did not seem overcrowded, but had long lines of persons at the entrance. In nine out of ten cases, premises of observed DECs were assessed as adequate and with proper setup for the delivery of election materials.

In one case, the DEC<sup>108</sup> had to send the PEB<sup>109</sup> protocol for revision, due to a lack of signatures of PEB members and incorrect data.

The evaluation of the work of DECs by ENEMO observers was positive (very good<sup>110</sup> or good<sup>111</sup>) in all the observed DECs, and their work was assessed as straightforward and transparent in all observed cases.

## **Observers**

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According to the legislation, observers are entitled to monitor the election procedures and to attend all meetings of EMBs, have access to all electoral information, voters’ lists, and the Protocols prepared by EMBs. National observers can also submit notifications about violations which should be considered by the chairperson of the electoral body. The mission was not informed of any problems or obstacles created for observers, whether domestic or international. EMBs were openly communicating with ENEMO observers, having meetings and providing information upon request. ENEMO’s observers did not encounter any problems during the observation of Election Day procedures.

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<sup>106</sup> In 40 percent of observed polling stations.

<sup>107</sup> In 60 percent of observed polling stations.

<sup>108</sup> DEC 34, Telenesti.

<sup>109</sup> PEB 34/15.

<sup>110</sup> In four out of ten polling stations.

<sup>111</sup> In six out of ten polling stations.

The CEC accredited 2,436 observers in these elections. Of these, 1,800 national observers, representing 6 public associations in the country (Promo-LEX, Mirad, Force of Veterans, etc.). Also, 636 international observers, representing 17 diplomatic missions accredited in the Republic of Moldova, 30 international electoral experts from 11 foreign electoral authorities and 606 representatives of 14 international organizations (ENEMO, OSCE-ODIHR, CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States, Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, etc.).

## About ENEMO

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The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) is an international nongovernmental organization that represents a network of national nongovernmental civic organizations founded on September 29, 2001, in Opatija, Croatia. It consists of 21 leading domestic monitoring organizations from 17 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including two European Union countries.

ENEMO seeks to support the international community's interest in promoting democracy in the region by assessing electoral processes and the political environment and offering accurate and impartial observation reports. ENEMO's international observation missions use international benchmarks and standards for democratic elections to evaluate the electoral process and the host country's legal framework. ENEMO and all its member organizations have endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations. Each ENEMO observer signed the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

ENEMO member organizations have monitored more than 250 national elections and trained more than 240,000 observers.

To date, ENEMO has organized 35 international election observation missions to 10 countries: Albania 2021, Parliamentary Elections; Moldova 2020, Presidential Elections; Montenegro 2020, Parliamentary Elections; Serbia 2020, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2020, Local Elections; Moldova 2019, Local Elections; Ukraine 2019, Early Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2019, Presidential Elections; Moldova 2018-19, Parliamentary Elections; Armenia 2018, Early Parliamentary Elections; Moldova 2016, Presidential Elections; Ukraine 2015, Regular Local Elections; Ukraine 2014, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2014, Presidential Elections; Ukraine 2013 – re-run of Parliamentary Elections 2012 in 5 MECs; Kosovo 2013, Local Elections, first round; Ukraine 2012, Parliamentary Elections; Kosovo 2011, Re – run of Parliamentary Elections; Kosovo 2010, Parliamentary Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2010, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2010, Presidential Elections, second round; Ukraine 2010, Presidential Elections, first round; Kosovo 2009, Local Elections; Moldova 2009, Parliamentary Elections; Georgia 2008, Presidential Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2007, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2007, Parliamentary Elections;

Ukraine 2006, Local Elections in Poltava, Kirovograd and Chernihiv; Ukraine 2006, Parliamentary Elections; Kazakhstan 2005, Presidential Elections; Albania 2005, Parliamentary Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2005, Presidential Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2005, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2004, Presidential Elections, second round re-run; Ukraine 2004, Presidential Elections.

ENEMO member organizations are: Center for Civic Initiatives CCI, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Center for Democratic Transition – CDT, Montenegro; Centre for Monitoring and Research – CeMI, Montenegro; Center for Free Elections and Democracy – CeSID, Serbia; In Defense of Voters’ Rights ‘GOLOS’, Russia; GONG, Croatia; International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy – ISFED, Georgia; KRIIK Association, Albania; Citizens Association MOST, Macedonia; Promo- LEX, Moldova; OPORA, Ukraine; Society for Democratic Culture SDC, Albania; Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center (TIAC), Armenia; Election Monitoring and Democratic Studies Center (EMDS), Azerbaijan; Belarussian Helsinki Committee (BHC), Belarus; FSCI, Kazakhstan; Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI), Kosovo; Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, Kyrgyzstan; Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), Serbia; Obcianske OKO (OKO), Slovakia; Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), Ukraine.