



European Network of Election
Monitoring Organizations
**Election Observation Mission to Moldova
Presidential Elections 2016**

Rețeaua Europeană a Organizațiilor
de Monitorizare a Alegerilor
**Misiunea de Monitorizare a Alegerilor
Alegerile Prezidențiale 2016**

ENEMO Election Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections of 30 October 2016 published the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

Chisinau, 1 November 2016 - On 30 October, the citizens of Moldova voted to elect the President of the Republic for the first time since 1996. The elections took place in an overall political context characterized by lack of trust in the institutions and political establishment. However, Moldovan citizens headed for the polls on Sunday to elect among nine candidates, marking a turnout of over 49% and showing their willingness to participate in the political life of the country.

ENEMO notes that “The legal framework generally provides a sound legal basis for the conduct of democratic presidential elections. The amendments to the Electoral Code regulating the presidential election were adopted just over three months prior to elections. Moreover, in order to comply with the electoral calendar, the CEC adopted supplementary rules close to the deadlines, which sometimes created unnecessary uncertainty and confusion.”

The election process was administered in a transparent and open manner. The majority of members of district electoral councils and precinct electoral bureaus were professionally trained prior to elections by the Central Election Commission based training center. At the same time, in some of the commissions, ENEMO observers noted that members had difficulties with understanding the legislation, which sometimes has led to misinterpretations of the Electoral Code provisions.

The Central Election Commission made noticeable efforts in implementation of a wide voter education campaign by running advertising materials on TV and Radio, in both State language and other languages.



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Moldovan voters were presented with a wide choice of candidates, however ENEMO notes that “the legal framework for elections requires to be revised, taking into account international standards, in order to provide equal playing field for all candidates, especially for inclusion of independent ones. Currently, the legislation leaves space for preferential conditions for candidates nominated by political parties with regard to campaign finances; as well as with regard to conflicting deadlines for candidate registration and start of the campaign, which led to a situation in which some candidates started campaigning ahead of others.”

The electronic voter verification system served as a very effective measure in preventing multiple voting, while it also enabled transmission of real time information from the polling stations to the CEC and to the public. In some polling stations ENEMO observers noticed technical problems in its functioning, problems that were promptly resolved and that did not affect the voting process significantly.

Substantial legal requirements for the campaign finance were introduced in 2015, however, ENEMO emphasizes that “the Electoral Code still lacks clarity or regulation on various aspects of the candidate campaign finance. The CEC applied the sanctions for campaign violations inconsistently and its decisions lacked sufficient legal reasoning on imposing one or other sanction. In addition, the CEC had no sufficient funds and human resources to verify the campaign finance properly.”

The complaints and appeals were adjudicated in timely manner and within the legal deadlines. The CEC considered complaints in an open manner and following procedures. However, decisions on complaints were not taken by unanimous vote, thus highlighting the CEC members’ political sympathies.

Moldovan media suffers from strong partisanship, polarization and lack of autonomy from political and business interest, as well as high concentration of ownership, which threatens pluralism. The conduct of audiovisual media is monitored and regulated, but print media and internet are not. Some broadcasters were sanctioned for unbalanced coverage but both monitoring modalities and sanctioning mechanisms are not effective and fail to ensure balanced and impartial coverage of the electoral campaign.

The Central Election Commission of Moldova has accredited a large number of domestic and international observers. While the Electoral Code provides for adequate rights and responsibilities of observers, the process of accreditations of international observers has been in certain cases delayed beyond deadlines, thus limiting them in the observation of the pre-election period.

On Election Day ENEMO EOM deployed ten STO teams covering opening of polling stations, process of casting the ballots, environment around polling stations, closing of polling stations, vote

count, as well as transfer and intake of the materials and tabulation at DEC's, to assess compliance with national legislation and international standards.

A total number of ten opening polling stations were observed during the opening, the voting procedures were observed in 114 polling stations and the counting of the votes in ten polling stations. Based on the reports and information received from the observers deployed countrywide on Election Day, the preliminary assessment of ENEMO is that the polling on 30 October 2016 was conducted orderly and in a transparent manner, generally in compliance with the international standards. Procedural irregularities observed in limited scope or of isolated instances did not have negative impact on the election process, as they resulted from lack of clear instructions, or negligent attitude of the members of the precinct electoral bureaus.

ENEMO's International Election Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections of 30 October 2016 in Moldova is financially supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, within the Accountability Fund Program; and the Black Sea Trust, a Project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Read the full statement in [English](#) and [Romanian](#).

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About ENEMO

The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) is an international network of 23 leading non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organizationsⁱ from 18 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including three European Union countries, founded on September 29, 2001.

ENEMO seeks to promote civil society organizations' involvement in societies with democracies in transition and other non-democratic forms of governing, towards improvement of electoral processes, greater transparency of the governments and their accountability to the citizens, and respect of basic human rights and freedoms. To achieve this aim, ENEMO works independently or in cooperation with its member organizations.

The main activity of ENEMO consists in assessing electoral processes and the political environment by deploying international election observation missions, and offering accurate and impartial observation reports. ENEMO's observation missions use international benchmarks and standards for democratic elections and the host country's legal framework to evaluate the electoral process. ENEMO and all of its member organizations have endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the 2012 Declaration of Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations. Each ENEMO observer signs and abides to the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

The Election Observation Mission for the Presidential Elections of 30 October 2016 to Moldova is the 23rd mission organized by ENEMO.

ⁱ ENEMO member organizations are: Centers for Civic Initiatives - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Center for Democratic Transition – Montenegro, Center for Free Elections and Democracy – Serbia, Center for Monitoring and Research CeMI – Montenegro, Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society – Kyrgyzstan, Committee of Ukrainian Voters - Ukraine; Election Monitoring Center – Azerbaijan, GONG – Croatia, ISFED – Georgia, It's your choice – Armenia, Citizens Association MOST – Macedonia, Pro-Democracy Association – Romania, Republican Network of Independent Monitors – Kazakhstan, Golos – Russia, , ObcianskeOko – Slovakia, Belarusian Helsinki Committee - Belarus, Society for Democratic Culture – Albania, Promo LEX – Moldova, KRIIK Albania Association, Human Rights Centre "Viasna" – Belarus, Foundation for Support of Civic Initiatives – Kazakhstan; Kosovo Democratic Institute – Kosovo, OPORA – Ukraine.