

Kyiv, March 12, 2019

“ENEMO assesses that the framework and conditions for holding democratic elections and political campaigns are present despite the cases of violations”

Kyiv, March 12, 2019 - During the press-conference held at News Agency UNIAN, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) presented its first interim report for the period February 08 – March 08, 2019.

Head of the ENEMO Mission, Mr. Zlatko Vujovic presented key conclusion of ENEMO First Interim report *“Overall, the framework and essential conditions for holding democratic elections and political campaigns are present in Ukraine for the 2019 presidential election. However, cases of violations to the rules of campaigning, allegations of abuse of administrative resources and vote buying, continuous changes in the membership of district election administration and concentrated media ownership, polarized media coverage negatively affect what is otherwise a highly competitive political environment”*.

In general, the CEC operates in an open and collegial manner. Mrs. Teodora Pop Trajkov, Deputy Head of the Mission said: *“Its official sessions are open to observers, media and candidate representatives. However, ENEMO notes that the CEC holds preparatory meetings where the actual deliberation and decision-making takes place at which presence of observers is at the discretion of the CEC and has at times been denied, limiting the transparency of their work”*.

Furthermore, Mrs. Pop Trajkov explained: *“DECs face frequent replacement of commission members, including ones holding the managerial positions, which negatively affects overall performance of commissions, leads to confusion or/and disrupt the electoral process”*.

Even though one of the most prominent candidates is a woman, ENEMO notes that the overall participation of women candidates remains low, with only 4 out of 39. *“Registration of presidential candidates has shown a considerable increase of participants in the electoral race in comparison with previous 2014 Presidential Election - 44 candidates registered by the CEC, 39 confirmed following withdrawal of 5 candidates”*, said Mr. Pierre Peytier, Election Expert.

ENEMO notes that registration of voters and updates to the voter lists overall seem to be processed in a timely and effective manner but concerns may be raised with regard to the low number of IDPs registered as of yet.

The importance of compliance of candidates and their supporters with the rules of campaigning and campaign finance was emphasized by ENEMO. Mr. Peytier added: *“Observations from the field have shown a considerable level of illegal campaign materials and unfair conditions, smearing of opposing candidates and personalized verbal attacks, damages to campaign materials or candidate headquarters and increased tensions in campaign rallies”*.



ENEMO would notes that there is no publicly accessible registry of complaints at any level of election administration. However, ENEMO welcomes the new practice of the Ministry of Internal Affairs which provides statistics and information related to election violation requests to the national police published on a special web-page.

ENEMO expresses serious concern that voters' rights and possibilities to make an informed choice may be limited, as the information provided to voters by media is often biased and contains different forms of hidden political campaign.

“Media violations during elections are inadequately regulated, without clear division of roles and responsibilities between different institutions and ineffective sanctioning mechanisms, which may lead to unequal access to media for all presidential candidates. New regulations related to countering disinformation have been criticized for lacking oversight with regards to fundamental rights and freedoms”, explained Mrs. Pop Trajkov, Deputy Head of the Mission.

Ms. Maja Milikic, Press and Logistic Officer the ENEMO Mission to Ukraine stated: *“This is the eleventh observation mission of ENEMO in Ukraine. ENEMO launched its activities in January and the observation mission will stay in Ukraine for close to eight weeks after the elections. On election day, 158 ENEMO observers plan to observe more than 1000 polling stations and observe opening, voting and counting procedures as well as the transfer of protocols”.*

The interim report is based on the ENEMO observers' findings from the field, where they focused on the work of election administration bodies, registered political parties and candidates, conduct of the election campaigns, election-related complaints and appeals and other election related activities.

ENEMO's international observation mission for Ukrainian Presidential Elections 2019 is financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development through the National Democratic Institute, the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union.

On the press conference on behalf of ENEMO were present Mr. Zlatko Vujovic, Head of the Mission, Ms. Teodora Pop Trajkov, Deputy Head of the Mission, Mr. Pierre Peytier, Election Expert and Ms. Maja Milikic, Press and Logistics Officer, Nino Rizhamadze, Legal Exper and Ana Nenezic, Media Expert.

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