



EUROPEAN
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ENEMO

FINAL REPORT

INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO MOLDOVA



**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION
AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM**
20 OCTOBER AND 3 NOVEMBER 2024

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Presidential Election and Constitutional Referendum in Moldova
20 October and 3 November 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation from the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of the Republic of Moldova, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) deployed an International Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the 20 October 2024 Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum in Moldova. The Mission remained in the country to observe the second round of the Presidential Elections, held on 3 November 2024, as no presidential candidate secured at least half of the votes in the first round.

The first round saw eleven candidates contesting for the presidency, with no candidate achieving a majority, leading to the second round between incumbent President Maia Sandu, nominated by the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS), and Alexandr Stoianoglo, nominated by the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM). Sandu won the elections with 54.67% of the vote and was sworn in as President of the Republic of Moldova on 24 December 2024. PSRM did not recognize the result of the elections.

The [Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions](#) of ENEMO for the first round highlighted extensive foreign interference and sustained attacks on democratic values, and attempts to undermine the country's progress toward stronger democratic institutions, emphasizing the challenges these posed for national authorities and institutions. Despite these challenges, the election management bodies (EMBs) conducted the process transparently and professionally, with only minor procedural violations, not affecting the overall integrity of elections. In its [assessment of the second round of the Presidential Elections](#), ENEMO noted that while the election was conducted efficiently and transparently, the tone of the campaign became increasingly negative. ENEMO stressed the need for a more structured approach to combat voter corruption, malign foreign influence, and illicit campaign financing.

These were the first presidential elections held under the new Election Code, adopted in 2022. The legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of elections in line with international obligations and standards. The electoral reform process was inclusive, comprehensive and transparent, involving political parties, civil society organizations, and international partners, but with limited participation of the parliamentary opposition. The Electoral Code has been amended eight times since its adoption, three of which in 2024, challenging the principle of stability of the electoral law. The legal framework for referendums needs further amendments to align it with international standards.

The electoral process was organized by a three-tiered election administration: the CEC, 37 District Electoral Councils (DECs) and 2,219 Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs). EMBs managed the technical preparations for the presidential elections and constitutional referendum professionally, efficiently and transparently, adhering to legal deadlines.

The CEC operated transparently, live streaming its sessions. Sessions were open to observers and the media, and members openly exchanged differing perspectives during the sessions. Decision-making was impartial and collegial. In general, the CEC enjoyed the trust of interlocutors. However, some EOM interlocutors from opposition parties and presidential candidates raised doubts on its impartiality, mentioning the fact that most of the members are appointed by the ruling majority. Overall, the DEC operated efficiently and transparently, with no major issues affecting their operations. The PEBs functioned according to the electoral calendar, with no major obstacles reported. PEB members were well-trained and prepared for Election Day. The decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not to staff three out of the five polling stations established in the Russian Federation lacked full transparency.

Voter registration is passive and continuous. Most ENEMO interlocutors were satisfied with the accuracy of the voter register. Moldovan citizens who are at least 18 years of age on election day have the right to vote, except those deprived of this right by a court ruling establishing a protective measure, at odds with international standards and obligations. Voters residing in Transnistria and those without a registered domicile or residence were not included in the main voter list and were instead recorded in the supplementary voter list on Election Days. Voters who changed their residence or were away from their registered address on Election Day could request an absentee voting certificate from their designated PEB. Voters unable to reach their local polling station due to health issues or other valid reasons could request to vote using a mobile ballot box.

Candidates for the presidency needed to meet various criteria, including a minimum of 40 years of age, ten years of residence in Moldova, Romanian language proficiency, and a higher education degree. The residency requirement is excessive and at odds with international standards. The requirement for higher education introduces an unreasonable and discriminatory barrier to candidacy and is not fully in line with international standards. These were the first presidential elections in which voters could sign in support of more than one candidate, as previously recommended by ENEMO. The signature verification process is in line with good practice and was conducted transparently and impartially by the CEC. Only political parties and electoral blocs can register to participate in the Referendum, a provision that is overly restrictive.

Presidential candidates and referendum contestants generally campaigned freely, and fundamental rights were respected. The election campaign was generally calm and low-key, however the tone turned more negative in the second round, including xenophobic remarks against the PSRM candidate. Campaigning for the referendum was overshadowed by the presidential election campaign, potentially diminishing the perceived importance of the referendum decision among voters. At odds with good practice, the campaign start overlaps with the signature submission deadline, delaying the campaign for candidates applying closer to the deadline and thus creating unequal conditions for candidates.

High-ranking state officials actively participated in a number of institutional events as the campaign was ongoing. While not prohibited by the law, ENEMO notes that the Government and other state bodies did not refrain from conducting activities on topics closely related to the Referendum during the campaigning period, at odds with international standards and best practice. Several interlocutors of the mission further mentioned allegations about misuse of administrative resources, such as involvement of public employees in campaign activities during the working hours and involvement of public employees in collecting signatures for certain candidates.

There are no legal provisions regulating third party campaigning in Moldova. In addition to the officially registered contestants, unregistered third parties were actively engaged in activities aiming to promote messages related to both the referendum and the presidential elections, including online. Illegal and malign interference of fugitive convicted businessman Ilan Shor, currently residing in the Russian Federation, who operated through a widespread network within the country, was a major concern. His activities, including large-scale vote-buying schemes and public calls urging citizens to vote in a certain way in exchange for money or other rewards, were designed to deliberately undermine not only the integrity of the election process and illegally influence the voters' choice, but also to destabilize the country's institutional system.

The legal framework for campaign finance mostly aligns with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO). Significant changes to the legal framework for campaign finance have been made since the last presidential elections, particularly with the adoption of the new Electoral Code in 2022. Despite being understaffed, the CEC managed the supervision of campaign finance timely and efficiently. Several ENEMO interlocutors among electoral contestants expressed concerns that the enhanced financial reporting requirements are burdensome and time consuming, especially for smaller parties and independent candidates.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Moldovan authorities have restricted certain media outlets and blocked websites spreading disinformation. However, throughout the campaign ENEMO observed the use of online platforms and social media to spread false narratives about the EU, aiming to undermine democratic institutions and the electoral process. The Audiovisual Council (AVC) monitored the coverage of 19 television channels and issued public reports. Findings of the AVC did not identify significant reporting biases, violations, or trends in reporting that could have been significantly detrimental or favoring certain presidential candidates. The work of the AVC provided a solid foundation for balancing the audiovisual media scene and helped maintain a relatively even playing field in audiovisual media during the electoral campaign.

Four of the eleven presidential candidates were women, including the incumbent, who was reelected. Women are well represented in Election Management Bodies (EMBs). The Mission noted sexist remarks by politicians, including candidates, predominantly directed at the incumbent president. These remarks, often framed through humor or irony, but sometimes as personal insults, sought to perpetuate harmful stereotypes

about women's perceived inability to lead effectively.

Three out of eleven presidential candidates mentioned supporting the rights of the ethnic minorities and supporting interethnic relations in their campaign materials. Many of the candidates communicated with the voters, including verbally and in written materials, in both Romanian and Russian languages.

The CEC established accessibility criteria for polling stations and other electoral process participants to uphold the electoral rights of persons with disabilities. CEC data reveals that only 1% of these buildings - mostly in Chisinau - were fully accessible. While ENEMO acknowledges the efforts of the authorities to provide persons living with disabilities equal opportunities to fully exercise their political rights, they still face a number of barriers and more should be done in this regard.

In line with international best practice, deadlines for considering complaints during the electoral period are short, within three days of the submission, but no later than election day. Election day complaints should be decided on the same day. The judiciary's emphasis on procedural correctness often resulted in dismissals without substantive examination of claims, reflecting a strict interpretation and application of legal requirements. All cases were reviewed in open sessions, allowing the parties involved to present their arguments, consistent with international standards. Judicial decisions were accompanied by detailed reasoning and case analysis. However, despite this procedural compliance, the substantive review of important campaign-related issues was often lacking. Many EOM interlocutors expressed low trust in the election dispute resolution mechanism.

Overall, both the first and second round Election Days were calm and well-managed, with positive assessments of the performance of PEBs and DECAs at most observed polling stations. Observed minor procedural issues did not affect the process. Incidents of potential voter influence, including organized voter transportation and ballot photographing, were noted, particularly during the second round. Authorities responded effectively to the most serious disruptions, including coordinated cyberattacks on the national voter registration systems and bomb threats at polling stations abroad. Counting procedures in both rounds were carried out properly, with issues managed professionally. The delivery of materials was generally smooth, transparent, and in line with legal provisions.

The electoral law guarantees non-partisan observation of the election process by both domestic and international observers. Election contestants and candidates can nominate representatives or proxies. Before the first round of Elections, the CEC rejected the accreditation of 782 observers providing justifications that lacked sufficient detail. ENEMO deems that disqualifying observer groups, without concrete evidence of actions that directly threaten electoral integrity, risks being disproportionate. ENEMO observers did not face any restrictions in performing their observations, nor were there reported cases of similar restrictions by domestic observers.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an invitation from the Central Election Commission, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) deployed an International Election Observation Mission (EOM), to observe the 20 October 2024 Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum in the Republic of Moldova. The Mission remained in the country to observe the second round of the Presidential Elections, held on 3 November 2024, as none of the presidential candidates received at least half of the votes cast on 20 October.

The EOM was deployed on 10 September 2024 and was composed of seven Core Team experts, based in Chisinau, and six long-term observers (LTOs), deployed in three teams,¹ covering the entire country. The EOM stayed in the country to observe the second round of the Presidential elections. Eighteen short term observers (STOs) joined the Mission ahead of election day and ten ahead of the second-round election day for the Presidential Election. Including the six LTOs, the EOM formed 12 teams of two observers each to observe the voting, counting, and tabulation of results for the first round and eight for the second. The Mission was headed by Dritan Taulla.

This was ENEMO's 42nd Election Observation Mission² and the seventh in Moldova.³ The EOM's aim was to improve the transparency of the election process and assess its integrity and compatibility with international obligations of Moldova and standards for democratic elections, as well as the domestic legislative framework. To achieve this, ENEMO observers monitored and assessed the overall political and electoral environment, the right to elect and stand for election, conduct of election management bodies, campaigning, gender representation, electoral dispute resolutions and other crucial aspects of the process. The EOM paid particular attention to the fulfillment of previous recommendations of ENEMO, as well as those of other international and domestic stakeholders.

The Final Report is based on ENEMO observers' findings throughout the electoral period. The Report was preceded by an [Interim Report](#), issued on 12 October, and two Statements of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, issued after each round of the election, respectively on [21 October](#) and on [4 November](#). Since their deployment, ENEMO observers conducted some 380 meetings with election management bodies, political parties and candidates, state institutions and high state officials,⁴ media, domestic civil

1 Based in Balti, Chisinau, and Comrat.

2 The 43rd Election Observation Mission of ENEMO, conducted in parallel with this EOM, observed the 2024 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia.

3 ENEMO previously observed the 2016 Presidential Elections, the 2019 Parliamentary Elections, the 2019 Local Elections, the 2020 Presidential Elections, the 2021 Parliamentary Elections, and the 2023 Local Elections in Moldova. Reports of previous elections can be found on the [webpage of ENEMO](#).

4 Including the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament.

society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, besides observing the work of election management bodies at all levels, as well as a number of campaign events. ENEMO would like to express its gratitude to all interlocutors of the IEOM for their cooperation and support.

ENEMO's International Election Observation Mission for the 2024 Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum in Moldova was financially supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI); the Kingdom of the Netherlands; and the Soros Foundation in Moldova. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of ENEMO and do not necessarily reflect the views of the donors.

I. BACKGROUND AND POST- ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

Moldova is a parliamentary republic, with legislative authority vested in the unicameral 101 seats Parliament and executive power in the Government. The President, serving as the head of state, occupies a largely symbolic position, with constitutionally defined responsibilities.⁵

On 16 May, in accordance with legal provisions,⁶ the Parliament voted to schedule the Presidential Elections on 20 October⁷ as well as to hold the constitutional referendum on EU integration, on the same date.⁸ The decision to hold the presidential election and referendum on the same day was criticized from a range of stakeholders, across the political spectrum, claiming it aimed to favor the campaign of the incumbent president. The 20 October elections were the third instance of direct presidential elections in the Republic of Moldova, following the re-establishment of direct presidential voting in 2016.⁹ The Constitutional Referendum was the fifth held since 1991, and the second one enacted into law.

Eleven candidates participated in the presidential race, which was followed by a second round of elections, as no candidate secured at least half of the votes cast.¹⁰ In the second round, held on 3 November, the incumbent president, Maia Sandu, nominated by the ruling party of Party of Solidarity and Action (PAS), won with 54.67% of the vote, defeating Alexandr Stoianoglo, the candidate nominated by the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM).¹¹

Following the 2021 Parliamentary Elections, in which the Party of Action and Solidarity, secured a majority of the seats in the Parliament, the presidency, executive, and legislative branches were aligned around a pro-reform, anti-corruption agenda with strong European integration aspirations. On 22 June 2022 Moldova gained EU candidate status and on

⁵ The President of Moldova, as head of state, ensures national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, as stated in Article 77 of the Constitution. The President convenes Parliament, proposes legislation, promulgates laws, appoints the Prime Minister, represents the country abroad, commands the armed forces, and may dissolve Parliament under specific conditions. Additional duties include appointing judges, granting pardons, and suspending unlawful government acts.

⁶ 60 days before the election day and 90 days before the end of the presidential mandate.

⁷ [Decision of the Parliament of Moldova](#) to hold the Presidential Elections on 20 October.

⁸ [Decision of the Parliament of Moldova](#) to hold the Constitutional Referendum.

⁹ Both the 2016 and 2020 elections featured the same candidates in the second round. In 2016, Igor Dodon, representing the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), gained more popular support, whereas in 2020, Maia Sandu from the Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) won the presidency, securing 57.7 percent of the vote.

¹⁰ In the first round Maia Sandu secured 42 percent of the vote and Alexandr Stoianoglo 26 percent.

¹¹ In the second round, in Moldova, Maia Sandu received 48.7 percent, while Stoianoglo 51.3 percent; while outside of the country, out of 231 polling stations opened in 38 countries, Sandu won in 221, with more than 80 percent.

14 December 2023, recognizing the progress made, the European Council decided to open accession negotiations with the country. The first Intergovernmental Conference at ministerial level to open accession negotiations was held on 25 June 2024.

The 2024 elections were held against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine, which has intensified the public discussion regarding the political geopolitical orientation of the country and accelerated Moldova's efforts to join the European Union. Moldovan authorities have unequivocally condemned the aggression on Ukraine. Amid post-COVID pandemic economic challenges, the war, accompanied by a significant influx of refugees,¹² and reduced energy supplies from Russia,¹³ has been placing a strain on the country's economy.

Moreover, the elections were also held under massive malign foreign interference attempts, and sustained attacks on democratic values and institutions, aiming to sway the country away from its path towards European Union integration. This included large-scale vote-buying and disinformation schemes linked to Ilan Shor¹⁴ throughout the election period. Efforts of the authorities to counter misinformation and vote buying schemes were significantly stepped up after the first round of elections. Following attempts by Shor to destabilize the country through violent protests in 2022 and 2023,¹⁵ and to organize vote buying schemes during the 2023 local elections, in April 2024, he formed a political bloc in Moscow, Victory-Pobeda, and continued to be actively involved in the political life of the country, by actively and illegally campaigning for voters to select "No" in the referendum and vote against the incumbent President.

The results of the constitutional referendum were tabulated by the CEC on 25 October¹⁶ and validated by the Constitutional Court on 31 October.¹⁷ The results of the Presidential elections were tabulated by the CEC on 9 November¹⁸ and validated by the Constitutional Court on 28 November.¹⁹ Maia Sandu was sworn in as President of the Republic of Moldova

12 Moldova hosted the highest number of refugees *per capita*.

13 On 1 October 2022, Russia's Gazprom cut the gas supplies by 30% and on 1 January it stopped sending gas to Moldova completely.

14 Ilan Shor is a former Moldovan politician, mayor of Orhei and member of the Parliament, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the Chisinau Court of Appeal in April 2023 for involvement in a 2014 banking fraud. In 2022, USA sanctioned Ilan Shor for colluding with Russia for undermining Moldova's EU bid. In 2024, the EU sanctioned Ilan Shor for orchestrating destabilizing protests funded illegally from Russia in fall of 2022.

15 In June 2023, the political party headed by Ilan Shor, Şor Party, was declared unconstitutional. See the [Decision no. 10 of June 19, 2023](#) regarding the control of the constitutionality of the "Sor" Political Party by the Constitutional Court.

16 Central Election Commission [Decision No. 3146](#), dated 25.10.2024 - on establishing the voting results of the republican constitutional referendum of October 20, 2024.

17 Constitutional Court [Decision No. 24](#), dated 31.10.2024 on the confirmation of the results of the republican constitutional referendum of October 20, 2024.

18 Central Election Commission [Decision No. 3208](#), dated 09.11.2024 - on establishing the results of the second round of elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova of 3 November 2024.

19 The Court's [Decision](#) noted the 'unprecedented scale' of voter corruption reported by investigative authorities, the amount of financial resources seized during the elections, and highlighted the cases of religious denominations' involvement in elections. Constitutional Court (28.11.2024) Decision N.25 on the confirmation of the election results and the validation of the mandate of the President of the Republic of Moldova.

on 24 December 2024.

The main opposition party, Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), whose candidate lost the Presidential election in the second round against the incumbent President, did not recognize the result of the elections. PSRM organized protests in front of the Central Election Commission²⁰ and the Constitutional Court.²¹ In front of the Constitutional Court, on 28 November, PSRM called for the invalidation of presidential elections, resignation of the government and early parliamentary elections.

Acting on the address of the Constitutional Court to the Parliament, the Parliament initiated legislative amendments to prevent and combat electoral corruption.²² The law aims to strengthen the sanctions for criminal liability related to electoral corruption and falsification of voting results, in cases where these acts are committed in the interests of an organized criminal group or criminal organization. The legislative changes will also ensure that cases of criminal offenses involving electoral corruption are efficiently processed within the judiciary system.

Following the first round of elections, the incumbent President announced plans to reform the executive branch. On November 19, Prime Minister Dorin Recean presented three new ministers²³ and announced future guarantees for prosecutors and judges to empower them to tackle complex corruption cases.

20 On 8 November, PSRM organized a [protest](#) in front of the CEC, which followed a [statement](#) published by the party refusing to acknowledge the result of the elections.

21 Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (28.11.2024) PSRM demands invalidation of presidential elections, resignation of government and early parliamentary elections, see [here](#).

22 Additional legislative measures to combat electoral corruption, voted in first reading by Parliament, see [here](#).

23 The Ministry of Agriculture, Interior Affairs, and of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Presidential elections and referendums are primarily regulated by the 1994 Constitution and the 2022 Electoral Code. The legal framework is further supplemented by secondary legislation adopted by the CEC, which is the primary institution in charge of implementing the electoral process.²⁴ Applicable provisions are also included in other laws.²⁵ Moldova is a party to key international and regional documents that govern democratic standards for elections.²⁶

In addition to establishing fundamental principles and guarantees, Article 78 of the Constitution also broadly regulates the election of the President. The Electoral Code provides detailed regulations for the organization and conduct of presidential elections and referendums, including the right to elect and stand for election, responsibilities and tasks of electoral bodies, campaigning and campaign finance rules, election observation and media coverage of elections, voting, counting and tabulation of results, and mechanisms for resolving electoral disputes and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

A new Election Code was adopted since the last 2020 Presidential Elections (in December 2022), only with the votes of the parliamentary majority.²⁷ The electoral reform process started in 2021, after the confirmation of the new composition of the CEC. Several rounds of consultations were held throughout the process, involving political parties, civil society organizations, and international partners, including ENEMO, but with limited participation of the parliamentary opposition.²⁸ The process was transparent, comprehensive and inclusive, in line with good practice and a longstanding primary recommendation by ENEMO.

Specifically, measures were introduced to enhance the transparency and stability of election management bodies, undue influence over public officials and voters, as well as potential vote-buying instances. Restrictions on misuse of administrative resources

²⁴ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Law No. 1381, dated 08/12/1997, amended, "Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova", Article 22, Central Electoral Commission General Duties

²⁵ The Law on Political Parties, Criminal Code, Contravention Code, Code on Audiovisual Media Services, Law on Advertising, etc.

²⁶ Inter alia, the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#), the [Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#), the [International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination \(CERD\)](#), the [European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms \(ECHR\)](#), the [Convention Against Corruption](#); the [Framework Convention on National Minorities](#), etc.

²⁷ On 1 January 2023, the new [Electoral Code No. 325/2022](#) came into force.

²⁸ See the 2022 [Joint opinion of ODIHR and the Venice Commission on the draft Electoral Code \(CDL-AD\(2022\)025\)](#), Section IV. "The process of reform", paragraph 23.

and stricter campaign finance rules were also introduced. The new Electoral Code addressed a number of previous ENEMO recommendations. The legal framework provides a sound basis for the conduct of elections in line with international obligations and standards.

The Electoral Code has been amended eight times since its adoption, three of which in 2024, challenging the principle of stability of the electoral law.²⁹ Several amendments made on the eve of the 2023 Local Elections that aimed to limit the right to stand for election of certain political actors, were later found unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court.³⁰ The January 2024 amendments allow the presidential election and constitutional referendum to occur simultaneously and the scheduling of the presidential election up to 90 days before the incumbent's term ends, as well as strengthen the campaign finance rules and the efficiency of campaign finance oversight. Based on recent amendments from May 2024,³¹ the CEC was enabled to establish the temporary District Electoral Council no. 36.³² In addition, in May 2024, the Parliament enacted a law,³³ classified as an ordinary rather than organic law, to partially introduce postal voting for citizens living in select countries abroad, thus improving inclusivity and suffrage rights. Many of the amendments were adopted without support by the parliamentary opposition.

To uphold the principle of stability of the electoral law, amendments to the legal framework close to an election should be avoided to the extent possible, and only limited to amendments addressing urgent legal gaps or improving inclusivity. Any necessary changes should follow inclusive and transparent consultations and allow sufficient time for implementation.

29 See the [Venice Commission Revised interpretative declaration on the Stability of electoral law \(CDL-AD\(2024\)027-e\)](#).

30 The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova, in its [Decision No. 226a/2023](#) from 26 March, 2024, declared several provisions of Electoral Code No. 325/2022 unconstitutional, particularly those concerning the ineligibility of individuals associated with parties declared unconstitutional. The Court found these provisions violated the principles of equality and presumption of innocence (see Article 16 and 21 of the Constitution). The Venice Commission, in its [Joint Opinion CDL-AD\(2023\)031](#), highlighted that restrictions on the right to stand for election must be proportionate and justified by a legitimate aim. It further stressed the need for procedural safeguards to prevent arbitrary exclusions and ensure compliance with international democratic standards.

31 [Law No. 109 from 26.04.2024 "On the partial implementation of postal voting"](#).

32 This change was necessary following amendments to the Electoral Code of ATU Gagauzia by the People's Assembly of ATU Gagauzia on 26 December 2023, which dissolved the permanent Central Electoral Council of Gagauzia.

33 Law no. 109, dated 26.04.2024, ["Regarding the partial implementation of postal voting"](#). For the first time, Moldovan citizens living abroad could vote by correspondence, applying specific rules for this election, without incorporating these changes into the existing Electoral Code. While the law outlines postal voting procedures, amends also the Contravention Code, and introduces new provisions related to the Electoral Code, these adjustments are not codified directly within the Electoral Code but are applied in line with it.

The second round of the Presidential Election is specifically regulated by one article of the Election Code,³⁴ while several other articles regulate other aspects of it.³⁵ Positively and in line with previous ENEMO recommendations,³⁶ the newly adopted 2022 Election Code addressed some gaps regarding the regulation of the second round, such as the deadline for resuming the election campaign³⁷ as well as for reopening the “Electoral Fund” bank account, enabling contestants to resume their financial activity³⁸ and enhancing legal certainty. In addition, amendments to the Election Code from January 2024³⁹ establish a clear deadline for the CEC to take a decision on the date for the second round of voting, no later than ten days ahead of it.⁴⁰ It should however be noted that this amendment has not been harmonized with Art. 85, para. 1 of the Election Code which provides up to five days for the CEC to tabulate the results of Presidential Elections, thus setting forth a special condition for the tabulation of the results of the first round of Presidential Elections but without explicitly stating that this is the case. Combined with the deadline of 48 hours from the closing of polling stations, for DECAs to present tabulation results to the CEC,⁴¹ this leaves very little time to the CEC for the final tabulation. In addition, considering the three days deadline for election dispute resolution, the campaign starts before potential complaints can be resolved.

To ensure coherence between the deadlines for results tabulation, dispute resolution, and the second-round election campaign, the Electoral Code should be amended to provide a more realistic and harmonized timeline. Consideration could be given to extending the interval between the two rounds.

The legal framework governing referendums falls short of fully meeting international standards. With the January 2024 amendments, one issue arose from the lifting of the ban on holding elections and referendums simultaneously. The amendments were not supplemented by necessary adjustments to campaign rules that would ensure a clear separation of the two campaigns, thus granting advantage to the election contestants that registered for both elections. Moreover, the absence of legal provisions explicitly requiring public authorities to remain neutral during the referendum campaigns is at odds with international standards and good practice (see also the Section on Election Campaign).⁴²

34 “Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova” Article 146.

35 E.g. Article 61, paragraph 11; Article 69, paragraph 4; Article 70, paragraph 3; Article 71, paragraph 6; Article 142, paragraph 2.

36 Aspects of the second round that were either deemed unregulated or insufficiently regulated. See the final reports of ENEMO for the 2016 and 2020 Presidential Elections, available at <https://enemo.org/>.

37 Arts. 70, paragraph 3 and 142, paragraph 2 of the Election Code.

38 Article 56, paragraph 17 of the Electoral Code.

39 Law no. 1, from 18-01-2024 [“On the modification of some normative acts.”](#)

40 Article 146, paragraph 4.

41 Article 84, paragraph 4 of the Election Code

42 [Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE](#) (1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document), paragraph 5.4. “the participating states agree on [...] a clear separation between the State and political parties; in particular, political parties will not be merged with the State”. As per the Venice Commission [Code on Good Practice on Referendums \(CDL-AD\(2022\)015](#) “Administrative authorities must observe throughout the campaign period their duty of neutrality [...] which is one of the means of ensuring that voters can form an opinion freely.”

To maintain a level playing field, legal provisions should be introduced to clearly separate the campaigns for elections and referendums, preventing any undue advantage for contestants participating in both processes simultaneously. Additionally, explicit requirements should be established mandating public authorities to maintain strict neutrality during referendum campaigns.

Before or during the electoral period, the CEC approved, redrafted or modified 14 regulations⁴³ and three instructions⁴⁴ related to the Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum of 20 October.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The President is elected through a two-round majoritarian system in a single nationwide constituency. The President's term of office is four years, and no person can hold more than two consecutive mandates. For the election to be valid in the first round, at least one-third of the total registered voters must participate. If this legal requirement is not met, the first election attempt is declared null by the CEC, and the election is repeated within two weeks. If the one-third voter requirement is met in the first round of the election, a candidate must secure at least half of the votes cast by participating voters to win.

43 Regulation on prior registration, CEC [decision](#) No. 2513 of 10.05.2024, in force from 23.05.2024; Regulation on the establishment of polling stations abroad, CEC [decision](#) No. 2542 of 28.05.2024, in force from 20.06.2024; Regulation on the establishment of polling stations for voters residing in localities on the left bank of the Nistru River, CEC [decision](#) No. 2544 of 28.05.2024, in force from 21.06.2024; Regulation regarding the particularities of voting during two days, CEC [decision](#) No. 2574 of 04.06.2024, in force from 21.06.2024; Regulation on electoral procedures in case of voting suspension, CEC [decision](#) No. 2657 of 30.07.2024, in force from 08.08.2024; Regulation on election coverage by mass-media institutions, CEC [decision](#) No. 1137 of 28.07.2023, in force from 04.08.2023, modified with CEC [decision](#) No. 2658 of 30.07.2024; Regulation on the manner of providing, distributing and broadcasting political, electoral advertising and messages of public interest, CEC [decision](#) No. 1155 of 04.08.2023, in force from 11.08.2023, modified with CEC decision No. 2761 of 02.08.2024 and [decision](#) No. 2716 of 20.08.2024; Regulation on the financing of political parties' activity, CEC [decision](#) no. 1102 of 21.06.2023, in force from 11.07.2023, modified with CEC [decision](#) No. 2672 of 02.08.2024; Regulation regarding the financing of initiative groups and electoral campaigns, CEC [decision](#) No. 1185 of 18.08.2023, in force from 05.09.2023, modified with CEC [decision](#) No. 2672 of 02.08.2024; Regulation regarding the particularities of the organization and implementation of voting by mail, CEC [decision](#) No. 2680 of 05.08.2024, in force from 09.08.2024; Regulation on the specifics of the nomination and registration of candidates for the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova, CEC [decision](#) no. 1205 of 30.08.2023, in force from 10.10.2023, modified with the CEC [decision](#) No. 2703 of 14.08.2024; Regulation on the establishment and registration of initiative groups, the preparation, submission and verification of subscription lists, CEC [decision](#) No. 1166 of 11.08.2023, in force from 05.09.2023, modified with the CEC [decision](#) No. 2716 of 20.08.2024; Regulation on the Register of Electoral Officials, CEC [decision](#) No. 1184 of 18.08.2023, in force from 06.09.2023, modified with the CEC [decision](#) No. 2716 of 20.08.2024; and Regulation on the accessibility of the electoral process for persons with disabilities, CEC [decision](#) No. 1187 of 22.08.2023, in force from 14.09.2023, modified with the CEC [decision](#) No. 2716 of 20.08.2024.

44 Instruction regarding the identification of remote voters by digital means, CEC [decision](#) no. 2688 of 08.08.2024, in force from 15.08.2024; Instruction on the procedure for counting, tabulating and displaying the results of postal voting, CEC [decision](#) No. 2689 of 08.08.2024, in force from 22.08.2024; and Instructions on the procedure for voting by mail in the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova and the Constitutional Referendum of October 20, 2024, CEC [decision](#) No. 2692 of 12.08.2024, in force from 12.08.2024.

If no candidate wins at least half of the votes cast in the first round, a second round is held two weeks later between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. The second round is valid if one-fifth of the registered voters participate. The candidate who receives at least half of the votes cast in the second round is declared the winner and becomes the President of the Republic. The President-elect takes office within 45 days following the election.

Constitutional referendums can be initiated by at least 200,000 citizens with the right to vote,⁴⁵ one third of the MPs, or the government. For a referendum to be approved, it must receive a majority of the votes cast and at least one-third of registered voters must participate for a referendum to be valid. Under Moldova's Constitution, any changes impacting the state's sovereignty, independence, unity, or neutrality must be approved by a majority of all registered voters.⁴⁶ Before the 2024 constitutional referendum, the Constitutional Court clarified that the proposed amendments for EU accession do not pertain to the sovereignty clause.⁴⁷

The question to which voters had to answer in the Referendum was formulated as "Do you support the amendment of the Constitution to enable the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union?". Following the result of the 20 October Referendum, changes were introduced to the preamble⁴⁸ and one Chapter⁴⁹ was added to the Constitution.

45 Signatures must be collected from at least half of the second level territorial-administrative units of the country, at least 20,000 signatures should be collected by each of the districts (Article 141 of the Constitution).

46 Article 142, paragraph 1 "The provisions regarding the sovereignty, independence and unity of the state, as well as those regarding the permanent neutrality of the State may be revised only by referendum with the vote of the majority of the registered citizens with voting rights."

47 Opinion no. 1, dated 16.04.2024 of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova "[On the draft law for amending the Constitution by referendum](#)".

48 The Preamble of the Constitution was supplemented with two new paragraphs: "RECONFIRMING the European identity of the people of the Republic of Moldova and the non-reversibility of the European course of the Republic of Moldova, DECLARING European Union integration as a strategic objective of the Republic of Moldova,"

49 The Constitution was supplemented with Chapter V, which stipulates the right of the Parliament to adopt the acts to accede to the constituent Treaties of the European Union, as well as to the acts revising the constituent Treaties of the European Union and stipulates that the provisions of the constituent Treaties of the European Union and other binding legal acts of the European Union shall take precedence over contrary provisions of domestic law, subject to the provisions of the Act of Accession."

III. ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES

The 20 October 2024 Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum were managed by a three-tiered election administration: the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), 37⁵⁰ District Electoral Councils (DECs) and 2,219⁵¹ Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs).

While the CEC and the DECs act on a permanent basis,⁵² PEBs are established during electoral periods.⁵³

EMBs generally managed the technical preparations for the presidential elections and constitutional referendum professionally, efficiently and transparently, adhering to legal deadlines. The lower-level EMBs (Election Management Bodies) received adequate resources and logistical support from the authorities. On Election Days, PEBs managed voting and counting professionally, despite challenges such as limited accessibility and minor technical issues, while DECs handled intake and tabulation transparently, though overcrowding, tension caused by extended queues and tiredness, and limited space occasionally affected efficiency.

The EMBs managed the tabulation of results of both rounds of Presidential Election⁵⁴ and of the Constitutional Referendum⁵⁵ transparently, efficiently and within the legal deadlines. The CEC published scanned copies of the protocols on its website and

⁵⁰ The DECs were numbered up to 38, corresponding to the [permanently established electoral districts](#), but the CEC had only set up 37 DECs, either permanently or on an *ad hoc* basis. No DEC had been established for Bender electoral district No. 3. DEC No. 37 which covered polling stations for voters residing on the left bank of the river Nistru, was responsible for voters from the Municipality of Bender.

⁵¹ Within the legal deadline, 2,221 PSs were established, of which 234 for voters abroad, including three for postal voting, and 30 for voters from the left bank of Nistru River. After [decision](#) No. 9 from 25.09.2024 of DEC No.38 to establish only 231 PEBs for voters abroad, as well as the CEC [decision](#) No. 2998 from 02.10.2024 to establish a polling station for hospitalized voters in Chisinau, and the DEC No.1 [decision](#) No.20 from 04.10.2024 to establish the respective PEB, the total number of the established PEBs is 2,219.

⁵² With the exception, as a rule, of the District Electoral Councils No.37, for the localities situated on the left bank of Nistru River and No.38, established for the polling stations opened abroad, which are being established *ad hoc* by the CEC for each Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. For the Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum of 2024, the CEC had to establish *ad hoc* the DEC 36 ATU Gagauzia, by appointing the interim chairperson and other DEC members, after the termination of the permanent functioning of the CEC of ATU Gagauzia by the People's Assembly of Gagauzia.

⁵³ According to the Electoral Code, PEBs are established by the respective DECs no later than 25 days before the Election Day (i.e., no later than September 25th).

⁵⁴ In line with legal provisions, on 23 October, the CEC adopted a [decision](#) on the tabulation of voting results for the presidential elections, as well as the organization of a second round of voting. Subsequently, on 9 November, the CEC adopted a [decision](#) on the tabulation of voting results for the second round of the presidential elections.

⁵⁵ On 25 October, the CEC adopted [a decision concerning the determination of the Constitutional Referendum results](#), and [a decision concerning the approval of the report on the referendum's results, organization and conduct](#).

tabulated results for each polling station, separately for each round of the Presidential Election⁵⁶ and for the Constitutional Referendum.⁵⁷ However, the tabulated results were not published in a machine-readable format.

To improve transparency and streamline result verification, it is advisable for the CEC to publish election results in machine-readable format, ensuring greater accessibility for stakeholders and the public.

The Constitutional Court confirmed the results of the Constitutional Referendum on 31 October⁵⁸ after reviewing the CEC's submissions of decisions, protocols and report, on 26 October.⁵⁹ Similarly, the Constitutional Court confirmed⁶⁰ the Presidential Election results and validated⁶¹ the election of Maia Sandu as President on 28 November,⁶² following the submission of documents by the CEC on 9 November.⁶³

CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (CEC)

The CEC is the hierarchically superior electoral body, with a 5-year mandate, which operates on a permanent basis. The CEC holds significant powers and responsibilities in organizing the electoral process and, in general, ensuring the integrity of the elections.⁶⁴ The current CEC consists of nine members: one member is appointed by the President of the Republic of Moldova and the other eight by parliamentary factions, based on their representation.⁶⁵ Of the nine CEC members, five are women, including the Chairperson and the Secretary. In general, the CEC enjoyed the trust of interlocutors. However, some EOM interlocutors from opposition parties and presidential candidates raised doubts on its impartiality, mentioning the fact that most of the members are appointed by the ruling majority.

56 Here the [scanned protocols](#) and [tabulated results](#) for the first round of the Presidential Elections. Here the [scanned protocols](#) and [tabulated results](#) for the second round of the Presidential Elections.

57 Here the [scanned protocols](#) and [tabulated results](#) for the Constitutional Referendum.

58 Here the [decision](#) of the Constitutional Court regarding the confirmation of Constitutional Referendum results.

59 Here the Constitutional Court [webpage](#) reflecting the CEC [application](#) for the Constitutional Referendum results.

60 According to Article 148 of the Electoral Code: *Within 10 days of receiving the documents from the Central Electoral Commission, but not earlier than the final resolution by the electoral bodies and the courts of appeals filed according to the established procedures, the Constitutional Court confirms or denies, by means of an opinion, the legality of the elections.*

61 According to Article 149 (1) of the Electoral Code: *The Constitutional Court confirms the election results and validates the election of a candidate, adopting a decision that is published immediately.*

62 Here the [decision](#) of the Constitutional Court regarding the confirmation of Presidential Elections results.

63 Here the Constitutional Court [webpage](#) reflecting the CEC [application](#) for the Presidential Elections results.

64 The CEC is responsible for creating and coordinating lower level EMBs, registering initiative groups, candidates and referendum participants, compiling and distributing voter lists, aggregating election results, deciding on complaints, overseeing campaign finances, etc.

65 The new Electoral Code has introduced a restructured CEC with seven members: one appointed by the President, one by the Supreme Council of Magistracy, one by the Government (on the recommendation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), and four by Parliament (two proposed by the parliamentary majority, one by the opposition, and one from civil society organizations with expertise in the electoral field). The new structure will be implemented in 2026.

On 16 July 2024, the CEC adopted the calendar⁶⁶ for carrying out the actions of organizing and conducting the Presidential Elections and the Constitutional Referendum. In general, the EMBs managed to comply with the deadlines provided in this calendar.⁶⁷

Since the start of the electoral period, 1 August up until 9 November,⁶⁸ the CEC held 60 sessions.⁶⁹ The Mission observed 39 of these, starting from its deployment (10 September). The sessions were conducted in a hybrid format, both in person and online. Before or during the electoral period, the CEC approved, redrafted or modified 14 regulations and three instructions related to the 20 October Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum.

The CEC operated transparently, live streaming its sessions on the official Facebook page⁷⁰ and YouTube channel of the institution,⁷¹ with recordings remaining available after the sessions. Sessions were open to observers and the media, and members openly exchanged differing perspectives during the sessions. The draft agenda⁷² for upcoming sessions was published in advance. Key documents and information on the electoral process were published in the webpage of the CEC, including the normative framework,⁷³ information on CEC sessions,⁷⁴ financial campaign and initiative groups reports, as well as financial and audit reports of political parties, and other information related to elections and referendums.⁷⁵ ENEMO notes that the previous positive practice of distributing draft decisions to observers,⁷⁶ media, and stakeholders before each session, common in previous elections, is no longer followed. Although CEC decisions were promptly posted on the CEC website, the minutes were occasionally delayed, at times by up to two weeks, which could impact the overall level of transparency.

To promote consistent transparency and effective information sharing, the CEC could reinstate the positive practice of distributing draft decisions to observers, media, and stakeholders prior to sessions. Furthermore, the CEC should prioritize the timely publication of meeting minutes, ideally within a few days, to uphold the integrity of the

66 CEC [decision](#) No. 2633 of July 16, 2024.

67 With the exception of the [registration of the Political Party "the Will of the People"](#) as a participant in the Constitutional Referendum, taken four days after their application, not according to the Article 200, (5) of the Electoral Code, as well as the CEC [decision No. 2998](#) of 02.10.2024 to establish a polling station for hospitalized voters in Chisinau, and the DEC No.1 [decision No.20](#) of 04.10.2024 to establish the respective PEB, both taken after the deadline for the establishment of Polling Stations and PEBs.

68 On 9 November the CEC approved the [results](#) for the second round, as well as the [report](#) regarding the results of the Presidential Elections of 20 October 2024.

69 Of the total number, 50 CEC sessions related to the Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum were held up until first round Election Day, seven between the two rounds and three after the second round of Presidential Elections.

70 <https://www.facebook.com/cecmoldova>

71 <https://www.youtube.com/@comunicarecec/streams>

72 The CEC website: [her](#)

73 Legislation, regulations, instructions and guidelines.

74 Agenda, decisions and minutes of the sessions.

75 Regarding lower level EMBs and their decisions, registration of candidates, complaints and appeals, confirmation of journalists, accreditation of observers, etc.

76 According to CEC representatives this measure was undertaken to protect personal data.

decision-making process and promote accountability.

From the start of the electoral period to 9 November, the CEC adopted 401 decisions directly related to the organization and conduct of the 20 October elections and the 3 November second round. These decisions primarily addressed observer accreditation, establishment of electoral councils and polling station organization, confirmation of journalists and approval of public interest messages and opinion polls, registration of initiative groups, presidential candidates, and referendum participants, confirmation of representatives, trusted persons, and treasurers, electoral campaign financing, review of appeals, notifications, and preliminary requests, etc. Decision-making was impartial and collegial.

Before the first round of elections, the CEC, along with its Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CICDE), conducted comprehensive nationwide voter information campaigns⁷⁷ and other information events, including for young voters and people with hearing impairments, and offered training programs for various election stakeholders.⁷⁸ In person training sessions for PEB members were conducted in every electoral district from September 25 to October 7, 2024, with 11,685 members attending the 341 organized training sessions. The Mission observed several training sessions for PEB members and found them to be comprehensive and effective. Webinars⁷⁹ and online training sessions were also organized, including for members of PEBs for voters abroad.⁸⁰

No additional training was provided to EMB members between the two rounds, though some DECAs held information sessions for PEB members.⁸¹ The Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CICDE) organized webinars for SAIS-E operators of polling stations for voters abroad, including for those newly assigned for the second round, to enhance efficiency. The voter information campaign continued between the two rounds of voting, with emphasis on preventing vote-buying, in line with the overall campaigning undertaken by the authorities.

77 Among other campaigns, the "Vote with confidence!" [election information and education campaign](#) for voters throughout the country through mobile teams was organized by the CEC, with information leaflets and the brochure "Voter's guide to the constitutional referendum and the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova on October 20, 2024" in six languages: Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz and Romani.

78 In person trainings, seminars and webinars were organized for judges and prosecutors, SRV registrars, representatives of Territorial Inspectorates of Police, employees of the General Carabinieri Inspectorate, signature collectors, and local councils' secretaries.

79 An online seminar for DEC chairpersons and operators; an online seminar for members of polling stations for postal voting; two YouTube videoconferences, visualized 12,300 times, as the first stage of training for PEB members.

80 In total, 19 online training sessions were organized from 11-13 October, which were attended by 969 members of PEBs for voters abroad.

81 ENEMO observers reported that the DECAs in Chisinau, Glodeni, Balti, Floresti, Donduseni, Drochia, etc., held information sessions with PEB representatives to address challenges encountered during the 20 October elections and to discuss experiences and potential solutions.

To further enhance efficiency and professionalism of the election administration, consideration could be given to organizing follow-up training or refresher courses for election commissioners between the two rounds, focusing on addressing any shortcomings observed in the first round.

The CEC printed some 3,6 million ballots for the first round of presidential elections and the same amount for the constitutional referendum. Some 2,8 million ballots were printed for polling stations in Moldova, and more than 850 thousand for voters abroad. The CEC printed 1,809 ballot papers for voters registered for voting by mail for each type of election, including for the possible second round of presidential elections.⁸² For the second round of elections, the CEC printed a similar number of ballots as in the first round,⁸³ including some 2,82 million ballots for polling stations in Moldova, and some 839 thousand for voters abroad. The ballots for both round of elections, for the first time,⁸⁴ were printed in six languages, in Romanian, and in five languages of ethnic minorities.⁸⁵

The CEC held briefings on both Election Days, and on 21 October and 4 November to keep the public informed. Despite experiencing poor website accessibility for extended periods after polls closed, including a brief outage in the first-round Election Day, and coordinated cyber-attacks that affected access to voter participation data during the second round, the CEC provided real-time voter turnout and preliminary election results online in both rounds, enhancing the transparency of the process.

Cybersecurity measures must be reinforced, to ensure that the Central Election Commission website remains operational during critical periods, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to data such as voter turnout and preliminary results, thereby bolstering public confidence in the electoral process.

82 For the partial implementation of postal voting in the USA, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland.

83 With the [decision](#) No 3130 of 23.10.2023, "Regarding the centralization of voting results for the October 20, 2024 election for the President of the Republic of Moldova and the organization of the second round of voting" it was established that ballots for the second round of voting will be printed based on the circulation established by CEC decisions no. [2999](#) regarding ballots for polling stations abroad, and no. [3005](#) regarding ballots for polling stations in Moldova, along with the provisions of decision no. [3022](#), regarding the impossibility of organizing the voting process for polling stations no. 38/196, 38/197 and 38/198 in the Russian Federation. With its [decision](#) No. 3178 of 1.11.2024, the CEC decided to print 500 more ballots for the polling station No. 223 of DEC No.1 Chisinau, which in the first round of elections used almost all the received ballots.

84 According to the [CEC](#).

85 Out of the 2,819,996 ballots printed for polling stations in Moldova, 2,137,641 ballots were printed in Romanian, 676,979 in Russian, 115 in Ukrainian, 3,400 in Gagauz, 870 in Romani and 991 in Bulgarian language.

DISTRICT ELECTORAL COUNCILS (DECS)

The CEC establishes the permanent electoral districts,⁸⁶ which as a rule, correspond to the 32 second level administrative-territorial units of Moldova, the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, and the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti. Under similar conditions, the Commission established two more electoral districts, for the polling stations opened abroad and for the localities situated on the left bank of the Nistru River.

Under the Electoral Code, District Electoral Councils are permanent electoral bodies that manage elections in the territory of the relevant electoral district. The DEC chairpersons are permanently employed, while the other DEC members are appointed ad hoc by the CEC for each election.

The 37 DECs were composed of 402 members in total, 286 women (71 percent) and 116 men (29 percent). This gender distribution was also reflected in the executive positions (chairpersons and secretaries), where there were 51 women (70 percent) and 22 men (30 percent). The DECs should be composed of an odd number of members, at least seven and at most eleven.⁸⁷ With the exception of DECs No. 37, which was composed of 10 members⁸⁸ and DECs No. 5 and No. 15 which were composed of 9 members, all the other DECs were composed of 11 members. The composition of DEC No. 37 did not comply with the Electoral Code.⁸⁹ However, the mission was informed that the even number of members did not hinder the decision-making.

The CEC should ensure strict adherence to the Electoral Code by maintaining an odd number of members in the DECs.

The CEC made 15 replacements in the membership of the DECs⁹⁰ before the first round of the Presidential Elections, and no replacements between the two rounds. According to DEC representatives, these replacements did not impact on the functioning of the DECs.

The DECs for polling stations abroad and for localities on the left bank of the Nistru River are not permanent but were instead established on an ad hoc basis. The 20 October Presidential Elections and Constitutional Referendum in ATU Gagauzia were

⁸⁶ CEC [decision No. 904](#) of 31.01.2023.

⁸⁷ Two members appointed by the Court within whose jurisdiction the DEC is located; two members appointed by the second-level local council, within whose jurisdiction the DEC is located; and one member appointed by each political party represented in the Parliament.

⁸⁸ After the withdrawal of the chairperson of DEC No 37 on 16.09.2024, confirmed by the CEC [decision](#) No. 2894 of 18.09.2024, as of October 9, 2024, the DEC No. 37 was operating with 10 members and without a chairperson. On 11 October, the mission was informed that a new chairperson was selected among the DEC No. 37 members. Until the end of the election period, no CEC decision had been made regarding the appointment of a new member to DEC No. 37, so the DEC continued to function with ten members.

⁸⁹ Article 35. (1) of the Electoral Code.

⁹⁰ The CEC made two replacements in each of the DECs No. 1, No. 2, No. 32 and No. 36 and one replacement in each of the DECs No. 8, No. 21, No. 23, No. 24, No.26, No. 28, No. 34.

administered by a temporary DEC as well.⁹¹ The respective amendments⁹² of the Electoral Code which enabled the temporary establishment of DEC No. 36 by the CEC, were made less than one year before the elections, at odds with the principle of stability of the electoral legislation provided by the Electoral Code,⁹³ and do not fully align with best practice (see also the Section on Legal Framework).⁹⁴ However, ENEMO notes that the amendments were necessary to ensure that the electoral process could be implemented in ATU Gagauzia, and without them holding the elections would have been extremely challenging.

The DECs establish polling stations and Precinct Electoral Bureaus and supervise their activity, train their members, distribute the funds, provide materials and electoral documents, ensure their supply with relevant election materials, such as voters' list and protocol forms, ballot papers, etc. The DECs also review complaints about decisions, actions or inactions of PEBs, assist the CEC with campaign finance oversight, tabulate the election results at the district level, and transmit the documents and electoral materials to the CEC.

The CEC's decisions regarding the DECs, along with DEC decisions, were made available in the designated section of the CEC website.⁹⁵ Additionally, DEC decisions were also posted at their respective premises and on the websites of some second-level administrative units.⁹⁶ Overall, the DECs operated efficiently and transparently, with no major issues affecting their operations.

PRECINCT ELECTORAL BURAUS (PEBS) AND POLLING STATIONS (PS)

Electoral Districts are divided into precincts and for each is established a polling station by the DECs, based on proposals from town and village mayors, at least 35 days before Election Day. PEBs should be established by DECs, at least 25 days prior to Election Day. PEBs must consist of an odd number of members, no fewer than five and no more than eleven members. The local council had to appoint three PEB members, and each political party represented in Parliament one. ENEMO observers noted a number of cases of local councils and political parties not submitting nominations for PEB members to the DECs. In these cases, the DECs appointed members from the Register

⁹¹ On December 26th, 2023, the People's Assembly of Gagauzia amended the Electoral Code of ATU Gagauzia (Decree No. 5385 of the People's Assembly of Gagauzia), including the termination of the permanent functioning of the CEC of Gagauzia. As prescribed by the Electoral Code, in the event of early termination of the capacity of Chairperson or Secretary of the Central Electoral Council of Gagauzia, the nomination of the respective interim chairperson and secretary has been made by the CEC with Decision [No. 2795 of 31.08.2024](#).

⁹² Article 36 (2) 1 of the [law No. 109 of 26.04.2024](#) regarding the partial implementation of postal voting.

⁹³ Article 11. (1) of the [Electoral Code](#): "The electoral system and the method of constitution of electoral constituencies or electoral bodies may not be changed until at least one year before the national elections"

⁹⁴ Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters ([CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev](#), item II.2.B) states that: "The fundamental elements of electoral law, in particular the electoral system proper, membership of electoral commissions and the drawing of constituency boundaries, should not be open to amendment less than one year before an election, or should be written in the constitution or at a level higher than ordinary law"

⁹⁵ <https://a.cec.md/ro/consiliile-electorale-de-circumscripție-16216.html>

⁹⁶ Several DECs maintain Facebook official pages, providing an additional channel for informing citizens.

of Electoral Officials, in line with the provisions of the Electoral Code.

The DEC's should work with local councils and political parties to ensure timely submission of PEB nominations, and explore measures to streamline the nomination process, so as to avoid delays.

Postal voting was implemented for the first time⁹⁷ in the 2024 election, as an additional option for voters residing in some countries abroad. The option was available for voters residing in six countries with the necessary infrastructure and agreements.⁹⁸

Within the legal deadline, 2,221 polling stations were established, of which 234⁹⁹ for voters abroad,¹⁰⁰ including three for postal voting,¹⁰¹ and 30¹⁰² for voters from the left bank of Nistru river.¹⁰³ After a decision of the CEC¹⁰⁴ to establish a polling station for hospitalized voters in Chisinau, as well as a decision of DEC No. 38¹⁰⁵ regarding the establishment of PEBs for voters abroad, the total number of the established polling stations was 2,219. The decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not to staff three out of the five polling stations established in the Russian Federation lacked full transparency.

97 Introduced in 2024 through [Law No. 109/2024](#) on the partial implementation of postal voting.

98 In the USA, Canada, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Iceland. Postal voters had to adhere to specific procedures established by the CEC for requesting and submitting their postal ballots.

99 84 Polling Stations more than those established by the CEC for the Early Parliamentary Elections of 2021.

100 In 37 different countries.

101 The three polling stations for postal voting were in the USA, Canada, and Norway. While the polling stations in USA and Canada should serve voters with a postal address in the respective country, the polling station in Norway should serve voters with a postal address in Norway, Finland, Sweden, or Iceland.

102 11 Polling Stations less than those established by the CEC for the Early Parliamentary Elections of 2021.

103 A complaint has been filed by PSRM to the Chisinau Court of Appeal and subsequently to the Supreme Court of Justice, regarding the establishment of only five polling stations in the Russian Federation. Both courts rejected the complaints.

104 CEC [decision No. 2998](#) of 02.10.2024 to establish a polling station for hospitalized voters in Chisinau.

105 With its [decision](#) No. 9 of 25.09.2024, the DEC No. 38 established only 231 polling stations for voters abroad. The DEC No. 38 did not establish PEBs 38/196, 38/197, and 38/198 in Russian Federation, because the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs withdrew its candidate proposals for these PEBs, as the Moldovan Embassy in Russia could not fully meet SIS standards and requirements for conducting elections in Russia, except at the Embassy premises. A [complaint](#) regarding the DEC No. 38 decision was submitted to the CEC by PSRM. The CEC [examined and partially upheld](#) the complaint submitted by PSRM, requesting, the establishment of PEBs for polling stations in Russia (No. 38/196, 38/197, 38/198), despite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' withdrawal of candidate proposals, and affirmed the legality of its prior decision (No. 2866/2024) regarding the organization of voting abroad, including in Russia, for the upcoming 2024 elections. Subsequently, the DEC No.38 with its [decision](#) No. 17 of 03.10.2024, decided that it was impossible to establish the 3 PEBs in Russia, as the MAE maintained their initial position. Consequently, the CEC with its [decision](#) No. 3022 of 07.10.2024 declared it impossible to proceed with setting up these PEBs, and ordered the destruction of 13,000 ballots printed for these stations, acknowledging the inability to ensure safe and functional voting in those regions. On October 8th, the PSRM filed a [prejudicial complaint](#) to the CEC regarding their decision No. 3022 of 07.10.2024. On 10.10.2024, the CEC [informed](#) PSRM that the Chisinau Court of Appeal is at first instance, as the competent body that adjudicates complaints regarding decisions of the CEC without complying with

prejudicial complaint to the CEC.

To maintain public trust and uphold electoral integrity, the executive should enhance transparency in the decision-making processes related to the staffing of polling stations abroad, ensuring that all decisions are clearly communicated and justified.

The mission was informed of several withdrawals of PEBs members,¹⁰⁶ mainly due to personal reasons. In most cases, replacements were made with members from the Register of Electoral Officials. Since all PEB members were required to be certified or have prior experience,¹⁰⁷ the CEC amended the decision regarding the 2024 training and certification plan in the electoral field¹⁰⁸ to offer more opportunities for interested individuals, including those nominated by political parties, to obtain certification, thus enabling them to serve as PEB members. While the composition of the DEC¹⁰⁹ remained unchanged from the first round of elections, some polling stations for voters abroad were completed with additional PEB members for the second round.¹¹⁰ Between the two rounds, in polling stations in Moldova a number of PEB members were changed, mainly due to personal reasons. The CEC reported that at least 25 members were dismissed or replaced for involvement in voter corruption schemes.¹¹¹

Measures should be introduced to minimize changes in PEB membership, particularly between election rounds, to ensure stability and operational efficiency.

The venues of some polling stations, mainly for voters from abroad, were changed between the two rounds. The DEC No. 38 for the voters abroad decided to change the locations of 12 polling stations,¹¹² as not all venues used as polling stations in the first round were available for the second. Also, DEC No. 27 of Riscani decided¹¹³ to relocate a polling station following a request from the PEB chairperson and an LPA decision. Voters abroad were informed in due time for the new addresses of the polling stations.

106 On average, 10 percent of the total number of members of PEBs in each district visited by ENEMO observers.

107 According to Article 245 (5) of the Electoral Code, persons who are entered in the register of electoral officials on the date of entry into force of the Code shall be regarded as ex officio certified, with qualification certificates valid for 2 years. The subsequent certification of these persons shall be made on the basis of the general rules.

108 The CEC [decision](#) No. 2910 of 19.09.2024 amended the [annex](#) to CEC [decision](#) No. 2243/2024 "Regarding the approval of the Plan for the organization and implementation of training/specialization certification in the electoral field in the 2024 session".

109 By CEC [decision](#) No. 3131 of 23.10.2024, the DEC members' term of office was extended until 5 November. In line with the CEC decision, the DEC^s extended the term of office of the PEB members until 4 November.

110 The CEC informed during their briefing of 3 November, 16:00, that despite their efforts to open numerous polling stations abroad to accommodate the diaspora, queues still formed in several countries, particularly in Italy, the UK, Belgium, and Romania during the first round. To improve the voting process, the DEC No. 38 decided to add more [PEB members](#) and [SAIS-E operators](#) at these locations.

111 The CEC reported that around 300 electoral officials were suspected, with 30 identified as involved in voter corruption schemes. Among them, three resigned, 22 were dismissed, four denied involvement, and in one case no action was taken. The CEC stated that it would closely monitor the activities of the remaining five EMB members. ENEMO observers reported that SAIS-E operators were also suspected, at least in Drochia and in Ocnita.

112 DEC No. 38 [decision](#) No. 5 of 28.10.2024.

113 DEC No. 27 [decision](#) No. 85 of 28.10.2024.

¹¹⁴According to CEC official results, each polling station with a changed venue saw an increase in the number of voters in the second round compared to the first, thus the relocation does not seem to have adversely affected voter turnout.

ENEMO observers visited a number of polling stations in the pre-electoral period and found a few of them closed, potentially hindering voters from accessing information about the voter list, requesting for absentee certificates, or applying for homebound voting. However, the PEBs functioned according to the electoral calendar, with no major obstacles reported. PEB members were well-trained and prepared for Election Day.

PEBs should maintain announced operating hours to ensure consistent access for citizens to obtain information, request corrections, and apply for absentee voting or mobile ballot boxes.

Most polling stations observed on Election Days lacked facilities to effectively accommodate older adults and voters with limited mobility, creating barriers to full and equal participation. However, ENEMO observers noted measures implemented to improve accessibility of polling stations during the electoral period.¹¹⁵

114 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs [published](#) the updated list of addresses of polling stations opened abroad for the second round of the presidential elections on November 3, 2024.

115 The DEC in Balți requested the municipality to carry out renovations at two polling stations to install ramps and enhance access for PWDs on election day. The municipality complied with this request, and ramps were installed at both polling stations.

IV. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Moldovan citizens who are at least 18 years of age on election day have the right to vote, except those deprived of this right by a court ruling establishing a protective measure.¹¹⁶ Deprivation from the right to vote on the basis of a mental disability is at odds with international standards and obligations.¹¹⁷

The legal framework should be amended to ensure that no citizen is deprived of the right to vote based on mental disability, aligning national legislation with international standards and obligations to uphold the principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination in the electoral process.

Voter registration is passive and continuous; citizens are automatically included on the voter list based on data from the State Register of Population (SRP). The CEC compiles the voter lists and manages the State Register of Voters (SRV),¹¹⁸ cooperating with relevant central and local institutions, such as the Public Services Agency (PSA)¹¹⁹ and Local Public Authorities (LPAs), to compile and verify the lists.¹²⁰

As of 2 October 2024, a total of 3,302,142 voters were registered in the State Register of Voters. Of these, 2,722,016 eligible voters were assigned to one of the second-level administrative units.¹²¹ The remaining voters included 284,755 Moldovan citizens without registered residence or domicile, including those having officially emigrated abroad; 274,475 citizens eligible to vote with registered domiciles in the administrative-territorial units in the left bank of Nistru River; and 20,896 citizens abroad who pre-registered for the 20 October elections, including those opting for postal voting.¹²²

116 Electoral Code, Article 14.

117 Article 29 of the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) "States Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, and shall undertake to: [...] Ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected."

118 A single integrated information system designed to collect, store, update and review the data on the Moldovan citizens who have the right to vote.

119 Maintains the State Register of Population, which serves as the source for data extracted for the State Register of Voters.

120 Local public authorities assist in updating and verifying voter lists, including addressing the issue of undeclared deceased citizens, by adding a note (declared as deceased) for individuals reported as deceased by relatives, based on valid documents such as foreign death certificates not yet transcribed.

121 Thirty-two districts, two municipalities and A.T.U. Gagauzia.

122 From the beginning of the online pre-registration period, 28 May, until 6 September 2024, 1,986 voters were pre-registered for postal voting, of which 1086 in the USA, 580 in Canada, 91 in Sweden, 131 in Norway, 72 in Finland and 26 voters in Iceland. Between 7 September and 26 September 2024, the authorized operator for the Central Electoral Commission completed the remote identification of 1,986 registered postal voters, with 1,809 accepted and 177 rejected.

Voters residing in Transnistria and those without a registered domicile or residence were not included in the main voter list and were instead recorded in the supplementary voter list on Election Days. Eligible students and pupils without a domicile or temporary residence in their place of study could vote at any local polling station by presenting their identity document and student card.¹²³ Voters who changed their residence or were away from their registered address on Election Day could request an absentee voting certificate from their designated PEB.¹²⁴

Voters were able to verify the accuracy of the voter list at their polling station¹²⁵ or online¹²⁶ and check their polling station details. Additionally, voters could request their PEBs to include or exclude them from the voter list or correct any registration errors, provided they submitted supporting documents.¹²⁷ ENEMO positively assesses the fact that voters were provided with a wide range of opportunities to check and correct inaccuracies in the voter list.

Voters unable to reach their local polling station due to health issues or other valid reasons could request to vote using a mobile ballot box.¹²⁸ This option was also available to individuals detained under an arrest order awaiting trial, those sentenced to prison with non-final sentences, individuals under arrest for contraventions, and those serving final prison sentences in penitentiaries.¹²⁹ The CEC informed ENEMO that for the first time in these elections, homebound voters could use a mobile secrecy booth.¹³⁰

For the second round of Presidential Elections, voters needed to request new absentee certificates or reapply for homebound voting. ENEMO observers noted that during their visits, some PEBs¹³¹ were not consistently open during their announced hours, limiting citizens' access to information and request opportunities.

On Election Day, to cast their ballots, voters had to present an Identity Card confirming

123 See the [announcement](#) in the website of the CEC.

124 Electoral Code, Article 61, paragraph 7.

125 According to the Article 62, paragraph 1 Electoral Code, voter lists should be made available for public scrutiny no later than 20 days before Election Day.

126 [See here](#)

127 Requests for changes should be made at least seven days before election day, and the PEB should promptly communicate these changes to the registrars in Local Public Administration, who should verify the data and update the State Register of Voters, as necessary.

128 According to Article 80, paragraph 4 of the Electoral Code, by submitting a written request starting from two weeks before election day until 2:00 p.m. the day prior. [According to the CEC](#), individuals unable to submit their voting application in person may do so through a family member or a social worker, and if they cannot sign the application due to a physical disability or illness, they can submit it verbally at the polling station or by telephone if in-person submission is not possible. On election day, applications are approved by the PEB until 2:00 p.m. only if a medical certificate is presented.

129 Electoral Code, Article 80, paragraph 5.

130 Article 29 of the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) "States Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, and shall undertake to: [...] (a), (i) Ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use.

131 In Balti, Cantemir and Cahul. In two polling stations in Balti, PEB members arrived only after being contacted by ENEMO observers.

their domicile or temporary residence at the polling station, or a temporary Identity Card verifying their Moldovan citizenship and residence, or a passport, including with expired validity. The multifunctional centers of the Public Services Agency were operating on Election Days, from 7.00 until 21.00, in order to hand over Identity Cards or issue temporary Identity Cards.¹³² The mission was informed that on the first round Election Day more than 2,600 identity cards were issued, 995 of which were temporary. Same as during the first round, offices of the Public Services Agency were open for the second round and issued some 1,637 Identity Cards, of which 368 were temporary.¹³³ In this regard, ENEMO commends the efforts of the authorities to facilitate the exercise of citizens' right to vote.

In accordance with the legislation, the same main voters' list from the first round was used for the second round.¹³⁴ Although the Election Code does not clearly provide whether the voters who reach voting age between the two rounds can vote, they could vote by signing in the supplementary voters list.¹³⁵

The right to vote for voters reaching 18 years of age between two rounds of an election should specifically be regulated in the law.

While most ENEMO interlocutors were satisfied with the accuracy of the voter register, some expressed concerns about deceased individuals still included on the voter list, as their removal from the SRV depends on the initiative of their relatives reporting it. However, none of the interlocutors considered the magnitude of this issue to be significant enough to question the integrity of the voters' list. The CEC representatives stated that the centralized State Register of Population ensures the reliability of the voter lists and that they address these concerns through regular updates and collaboration with other state institutions.

National authorities should improve the mechanisms for updating the State Voter Register (SVR), particularly for deceased citizens, by introducing proactive measures to cross-check data with other state registries and addressing gaps related to deaths abroad and in Transnistria.

132 [Information](#) from the Public Services Agency.

133 The [announcement](#) of the Public Services Agency.

134 ENEMO observers reported issues with the voter lists in the first round, particularly concerning voters unable to find their names in the main voters list; however, PEB members effectively addressed this by enrolling these voters onto supplementary lists. Since the main voter lists will remain the same for the second round, similar issues are expected.

135 The State Register of Voters has been updated daily with entries of voters that turned 18, as well as with information for deceased voters. According to the CEC, 1,608 voters turned of age between the two rounds, including 126 voters on 3 November.

V. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT

The right to stand for presidential elections is granted to Moldovan citizens who are eligible to vote, are at least 40 years of age, have lived in Moldova for a minimum of 10 years, are proficient in Romanian language,¹³⁶ and hold a higher education degree.¹³⁷ Active-duty military personnel, individuals sentenced to prison by a final court decision, those with active criminal records for intentional offenses, and individuals deprived of the right to hold public positions by a final court decision are ineligible to stand for election. The residency requirement is excessive and at odds with best practice.¹³⁸ The procedure for establishment of language proficiency is not regulated. The requirement for higher education which introduces an unreasonable and discriminatory barrier to candidacy and is not fully in line with international standards.¹³⁹

The residency requirement for presidential candidates should be removed or otherwise reduced, to align with international standards. The requirement for higher education for presidential candidates should be removed, as it creates an unreasonable barrier to candidacy and contradicts international standards.

The procedure for verifying language proficiency for presidential candidates should be clearly regulated, transparent, and based on objective, measurable criteria.

The nomination of presidential candidates started 60 days and ended 30 days before Election Day. Candidates could be nominated by political parties, electoral blocs, or a group of voters. An initiative group needed to be formed to support the nomination, consisting of a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 100 eligible voters. Out of 18 requests

¹³⁶ The proficiency in Romanian language should be verified by the CEC, in accordance with Article 18 of the [Law on Citizenship](#).

¹³⁷ Graduated with a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

¹³⁸ Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters ([CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev](#)), Guidelines on Elections, item I 1.1, c., Residence: "iii. a length of residence requirement may be imposed on nationals solely for local or regional elections; iv. the requisite period of residence should not exceed six months; a longer period may be required only to protect national minorities; v. the right to vote and to be elected may be accorded to citizens residing abroad."

¹³⁹ According to Article 21, 1. of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#), "Everyone has the right to participate in their country's government, either directly or through freely chosen representatives." Article 25 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#) states that "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity... without unreasonable restrictions, (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, and (b) To vote and to be elected..." Furthermore, Article 15 of the [general comment No. 25 of the UN Human Rights Committee](#) states that: "Persons who are otherwise eligible to stand for election should not be excluded by unreasonable or discriminatory requirements such as education, residence or descent, or by reason of political affiliation."

to register an initiative group, the CEC approved 13.¹⁴⁰

To be registered by the CEC, all candidates were required to submit between 15,000 and 25,000 voter signatures.¹⁴¹ The number of signatures required is in line with international standards.¹⁴² Positively, for the first time, in these presidential elections voters could sign in support of more than one candidate, as previously recommended by ENEMO.¹⁴³

The right to stand for election was respected. Of the thirteen registered initiative groups, twelve¹⁴⁴ submitted supporting signatures lists and other nominating documents. After the verification process of supporting signatures, the CEC decided to register 11 candidates,¹⁴⁵ seven men and four women, offering voters a choice of political options. The CEC rejected only one candidate for insufficient number of signatures.¹⁴⁶ The candidate appealed the decision of the CEC to the Chisinau Court of Appeals¹⁴⁷ and subsequently to the Supreme Court of Justice¹⁴⁸ and both courts upheld the decision of the CEC.

140 The CEC rejected the registration of initiative groups supporting: [Valeriu Pleșca](#), due to his position at the time of submission as president of a different political party, the “Christian-Social Union of Moldova”, which violated constitutional court principles prohibiting camouflaged electoral blocs; [Ludmila Corsun](#), because she failed to meet the Romanian language proficiency requirement, as established by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and the Electoral Code, which was confirmed during her evaluation by the CEC; [Vasile Bolea](#), due to contradicts between the applicant’s statements, and the fact that he is the Renaissance Party chairperson and the publicly declared candidate of the Political Party “Renaissance”, the Political Party “CHANCE”, the Political Party “Alternative and Salvation Force of Moldova” and the Political Party “VICTORIE”, which had the intention of forming a bloc; [Vasile Tarlev](#), due to his status as president of the “Party for the Future of Moldova” that was deemed incompatible with his claim of being an independent candidate, which violates the legal requirement for genuine independence from political parties. Mr. Tarlev’s initiative group was registered with a second decision by the CEC, as nominated by the [Political Party for the Future of Moldova](#). Two decisions to register initiative groups were rejected due to lack of votes of CEC members: of Valentin Borodachi, a member of political party PACE, and of Aurel Tabarcea, for engagement in activities of the political party “Chance”.

141 Signatures should be collected by at least half of Moldova’s second-level administrative units, with a minimum of 600 signatures from each unit.

142 As per the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters ([CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev](#), Guidelines, item I.1.3. Submission of Signatures, ii., the number of signatures should be lower than 1 percent of the voters in the constituency concerned.

143 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission. Guidelines on Political Party Regulation. “In particular, a requirement that a citizen be allowed to sign in support of only one party should be avoided, as such a regulation would affect his/her right to freedom of association and could easily disqualify parties despite their attempts in good faith to fulfill this requirement”.

144 The initiative group supporting Alexandru Arseni did not submit supporting signatures and nominating documents.

145 Alexandr Stoianoglo, “Party of Socialists from the Republic of Moldova”; Maia Sandu, “Action and Solidarity Party”; Renato Usatii, “Our Party”; Vasile Tarlev, “Party for the Future of Moldova”; Irina Vlah, Independent Candidate; Ion Chicu, “Party of Development and Consolidation of Moldova”; Andrei Nastase, Independent Candidate; Octavian ȚÎCU, “Together” Electoral Bloc; Victoria Furtuna, Independent candidate; Tudor Ulianoschi, Independent Candidate; Natalia Morari, independent candidates.

146 Igor Munteanu’s candidacy for President of the Republic of Moldova was rejected because the number of valid signatures collected fell below the minimum legal requirement of 15,000, and signatures were valid in fewer than half of the required administrative-territorial units. [Decision of the CEC](#).

147 Chisinau Court of Appeals decision: [Here](#).

148 Supreme Court of Justice conclusion: [Here](#).

The signature verification process is in line with good practice and was conducted transparently and impartially by the CEC.¹⁴⁹ Five of the registered candidates were supported by political parties, one by an electoral bloc, and five ran as independents.

REGISTRATION OF REFERENDUM CONTESTANTS

Only political parties and electoral blocs could register to participate in the Referendum.¹⁵⁰ This provision is overly restrictive as it excludes independent citizen groups and civil society organizations from campaigning in the referendum. After the CEC published the list of eligible political parties, based on data from the Public Services Agency, political parties and electoral blocs¹⁵¹ were required to submit their registration applications to the CEC. This needed to occur no earlier than 60 days and no later than 30 days before the referendum date. In their registration applications, the parties had to declare whether they supported the "Yes" or "No" option in the referendum.

Independent citizen groups and civil society organizations should be allowed to register as referendum contestants alongside political parties, promoting inclusivity and broader public participation.

Within the deadline, 19 political parties and electoral blocs applied to register as Referendum contestants. Of these, the CEC registered 16.¹⁵² Subsequently, on 14 September the CEC decided to revoke the registration of the Chance¹⁵³ party after the Court of Appeals of Balti decided to limit the party's activity for a period of three months due to violations related to financial obligations, making it ineligible to participate in the referendum. After the de-registration of the Chance party, the total number of

149 Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters ([CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev.](#), Guidelines I.1.3. Submission of candidatures, iii: "Checking of signatures must be governed by clear rules, particularly concerning deadlines; The checking process must in principle cover all signatures; however, once it has been established beyond doubt that the requisite number of signatures has been collected, the remaining signatures need not be checked."

150 Electoral Code, Article 200

151 The registration of electoral blocs is carried out under the conditions of Article 64 of the Electoral Code.

152 The "[VICTORIE](#)" Political Party was not registered as a referendum contestant because it failed to provide the requested documentation by the deadlines, and its actions were deemed an attempt to form a "camouflaged" electoral bloc, violating transparency and legality in the electoral process; the political party "[PACE](#)" was not registered as a referendum contestant because the decision to participate was made by a party body that lacked the proper authority according to its own statute, and the party failed to provide the necessary documents to clarify this issue within the established deadlines; The electoral bloc "[Victorie - Pobeda](#)" was not registered as a referendum contestant because it failed to address identified deficiencies in its application, particularly regarding the use of a name that is considered identical to an existing political party, which violated regulations set by the Central Electoral Commission.

153 [Decision No. 2864](#), from 14.09.2024 of the CEC "On the execution of the decision of the Balti Court of Appeal of 11 September 2024"

referendum contestants was reduced to 15.¹⁵⁴ The Decision of the CEC to register the Political Party "The Will of the People"¹⁵⁵ as a participant in the Referendum was taken four days after their application, at odds with the legal provisions.¹⁵⁶

The CEC should adhere strictly to the legal provisions and timelines when processing referendum contestant applications, ensuring all decisions, including the registration of political parties, are made within the established deadlines.

154 In total 14 Parties: Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova; Green Ecologist Party; Miscarea Respect Moldova; Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; Renaissance Party; The Coalition for Unity and Welfare; Party of Action and Solidarity; National Alternative Movement; Democracy at Home; Alliance for The Union Of Romanians; Party of National Reunification "ACASĂ"; European Social Democratic Party; The Will of the People, and one electoral bloc: "Together" Electoral Bloc. While the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova and Renaissance are registered in support of the option "NO", the other 13 contestants are registered for the option "YES."

155 Decision no. 2945 ["On the application for registration of the Political Party "The Will of the People" as a participant in the constitutional republican referendum from October 20, 2024"](#), dated 24.09.2024.

156 Article 200, (5) of the Electoral Code: "The Central Electoral Commission shall, within 3 days, consider the application and the attached documents and adopt a decision on the registration of the political party or of the electoral bloc of parties as a participant in the Republican Referendum or on the grounded refusal of registration."

VI. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

Citizens, political parties, electoral blocs, candidates, and authorized representatives of presidential candidates registered by the CEC¹⁵⁷ are granted the right to campaign, subject to the restrictions outlined in the Electoral Code.¹⁵⁸ For referendums, campaigning is limited to the two options provided: “Yes” or “No”. In addition to Chapter VIII of the 2022 Electoral Code, electoral campaigning and the rights and responsibilities of election participants are governed by various other laws.¹⁵⁹ Several restrictions apply to campaigning, including organizing public events that are not campaign events;¹⁶⁰ or using images of several local and foreign entities.¹⁶¹

The official campaign starts upon the registration of a candidate or election contestant, but not earlier than 30 days before Election Day.¹⁶² For the first round of 2024 Presidential Elections and Referendum, the campaign officially started on 20 September and continued until Friday, 18 October. In line with previous ENEMO recommendations,¹⁶³ timeframes for campaigning for the second round of presidential elections were established in the new Electoral Code, stipulating that the electoral campaign must start no later than 10 days before the date of the elections. Campaigning resumed on Thursday, 24 October and ended at midnight on Friday, 2 November 2024.¹⁶⁴ No campaign events or other visible public campaign activities were observed by the mission before the official start of the campaign.

At odds with good practice, the signature verification process overlaps with the start of the election campaign.¹⁶⁵ The nomination process for Presidential candidates starts 60

157 Election Code, Article 70, paragraph 1.

158 *Ibid*, paragraph 2, stipulates restrictions and limitations of this right.

159 Including the 2002 Criminal Code, the 2008 Contravention Code, 2018 Code on Audiovisual Media Services, the 2011 Law on Personal Data Protection, the 2007 Law on Political Parties, the 2022 Law on Advertising, the 2000 Law on Citizenship and CEC regulations.

160 E.g., election contestants cannot organize concerts, competitions, or other events, cannot display slogans, messages, or distribute materials that include the contestant’s symbols or other identifiers during such events and are not allowed to participate in these events for political promotion purposes.

161 E.g., the use of imagery associated with religious cults, foreign officials, state institutions or authorities of other countries, international organizations, or symbols of political parties declared unconstitutional is also strictly banned. Additionally, the campaign must not feature symbols of foreign states, historical figures, or any images that promote defamation of the state, incite war, aggression, national or racial hatred, discrimination, territorial separatism, public violence, or pose a threat to the constitutional order.

162 Article 70, para 3 of the Election Code.

163 See the final reports of ENEMO for the 2016 and 2020 Presidential Elections, available at <https://enemo.org/>.

164 Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova, 2024, Article 142.

165 As per the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (CDL-AD(2002)023rev, Guidelines, item I.1.3. Submission of Signatures, v., “the validation of signatures must be completed by the start of the election campaign;”

days before election day and must be completed 30 days before the election day.¹⁶⁶ Thus, the campaign start overlaps with the signature submission deadline (20 September in this election), delaying the campaign for candidates applying closer to the deadline due to the CEC's processing time,¹⁶⁷ creating unequal conditions for candidates. Some candidates began campaigning as late as 29 September, losing significant campaigning time. Moreover, if a candidacy is rejected, the complaints process through various instances (the Court of Appeals of Chisinau and the Supreme Court of Justice) can shorten even more the available campaigning time, potentially leaving as little as one week for campaigning (see the Section on Complaints and Appeals).

Deadlines for signature submission and verification, including time for potential complaints resolution, should be scheduled well before the official start of the campaign, to allow all candidates sufficient time to complete the necessary procedures and begin campaigning on an equal footing.

Presidential candidates and referendum contestants generally campaigned freely, and fundamental rights were respected.¹⁶⁸ ENEMO observers did not report incidents of violence or intimidation against candidates. However, political parties reported several cases of promotional materials being seized, which they viewed as hindering their ability to freely present their views and political platforms. Some parties formally complained to the prosecutor's office, alleging that these actions restricted their campaigning rights. The police, however, justified the seizures as part of investigations into alleged illicit financing involving organized criminal groups.¹⁶⁹

The election campaign was generally calm and low-key, particularly for the Referendum. However, the tone turned more negative in the second round of the Presidential Election. The start of the second-round campaign was marred by xenophobic remarks against the PSRM candidate, Stoianoglo (see the Section on National Minorities). Minor legal

166 ENEMO previously raised similar concerns about the overlap between the candidate registration deadline and the start of the campaign in Moldova. Candidates that are registered earlier can start campaigning before others, creating an uneven playing field. Following that, ENEMO has recommended the change of this practice and corresponding legal framework.

167 The process can be delayed even further in case a candidate is rejected by the CEC, complaints to a court of law and is granted the right to stand for election later in the course of the campaign.

168 CSCE Copenhagen Document, para 7.7. "[To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will] ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution;"

169 This refers to the case of political party "Renastere", who informed the mission on mentioned activities.

violations were reported and addressed by law enforcement and relevant institutions.¹⁷⁰

Candidates relied heavily on traditional media, such as TV and radio, as well as social media platforms for campaigning. Their activities included distributing campaign materials, hosting small voter and employee meetings, and engaging in door-to-door canvassing. During the first round, the most prominent campaigners were Maia Sandu, Alexandr Stoianoglo, Renato Usatii, and, to a lesser extent, Irina Vlah.¹⁷¹ The second-round campaign followed similar patterns, with the incumbent president maintaining the most visible presence.

In the first round, presidential candidates largely focused their campaign messages on economic and social issues.¹⁷² While foreign policy and the country's geopolitical orientation were widely discussed in the public sphere - especially in relation to the Referendum - they were not prominent in the candidates' talking points. In the second round, campaign messages continued to emphasize anti-corruption and the rule of law but included a stronger focus on foreign policy and geopolitical orientation. The ruling party candidate and incumbent president frequently highlighted European Union financial aid, emphasizing its tangible benefits for national infrastructure projects. Many campaign promises and parts of the candidates' platforms in both rounds exceeded the constitutional and legal authority of the presidential office.¹⁷³

The Referendum campaign primarily revolved around EU relations and foreign policy, but it was overshadowed by the presidential election campaign, potentially diminishing the perceived importance of the referendum among voters.

Although several debates were held, not all invited candidates participated, often resulting in interviews with only one candidate, particularly during the first round. The reluctance of candidates to engage in TV and media debates is a concerning trend. One of the debates of the second round was organized based on the preferences of candidates' campaign teams rather than adhering to the legal framework governing

170 As stipulated within the report of the General Police Inspectorate to the CEC, the violations mostly were referred to following legal provisions: Article 364 paragraph (10) (production, distribution, supply and/or dissemination of political advertising that does not meet the conditions of the Law no. 62/2022 on advertising and the Electoral Code no. 325/2022) of the Contravention Code, Article 50 paragraph (1) (displaying election campaign material or referendum support material in a place other than the established place, as well as damaging it) of the Contravention Code, Article 50 paragraph (2) (Producing, distributing, supplying and/or disseminating election campaign advertising materials that do not meet the conditions of the Law no. 62/2022 on advertising and the Election Code no. 325/2022) of the Contravention Code, Article 364 paragraph (2) (placing outdoor advertising on trees) of the Contravention Code, Article 364 paragraph (5) (Unauthorized presentation, production or broadcasting of advertising of mass media sessions with the use of methods of psychological influence) of the Misdemeanors Code.

171 The last mainly reported to be campaigning in regions of the North and South.

172 These included infrastructure and economic development projects, such as industrialization, public works on road infrastructure, diaspora-related issues, youth mobility, education, job creation, fight against corruption and energy supplies, including the diversification of energy sources.

173 While the President has the right to initiate legislation, which de facto gives her/him broad powers in terms of what can be proposed, the ultimate decision making on these initiatives is invested in the Parliament.

debates and the role of public service broadcasters.¹⁷⁴ ENEMO notes that this approach lowered the standards for adequately informing citizens about candidates' programs, capabilities, and intentions, as well as the responsibilities of the presidential office. Consequently, this may have limited citizens' ability to make a fully informed choice.

The Central Electoral Commission and the Audiovisual Council should ensure that the organization of debates adheres strictly to the legal framework, with a clear role for public service broadcasters in facilitating impartial and inclusive debates.

Candidates are prohibited from using administrative resources during the campaign. This includes participating in or launching infrastructure projects or public procurement activities funded by the national budget, as well as using public equipment, facilities, or goods. Most public officials are required to suspend their official duties if they take an active role in campaigning. However, this rule does not apply to the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister, or the President of Moldova, leaving space for high state officials to use their official duties as a means to campaign.

The Government and state bodies must ensure a clear separation between official duties and campaign activities during the election period. To ensure a fair and level playing field during elections, high public officials should limit their participation in campaigning events.

The mission observed that advertisements related to the campaign "Europe for You" which started in July 2024 and officially ended on 18 August was still visible on most of the Government's web pages in parallel with the campaigning for the referendum, throughout the election campaign. In addition, high-ranking state officials, including the President, ministers and the Prime Minister actively participated in a number of institutional events as the campaign was ongoing. Concerns should be raised that these official duties and frequent reporting on such topics within the news broadcastings on various media, may have favored the ruling party and its candidate.¹⁷⁵ While not prohibited by the law, ENEMO notes that the Government and other state bodies did not refrain from conducting activities on topics closely related with the Referendum during the campaigning period, at odds with international standards and best practice (see also the Section on Legal Framework).¹⁷⁶

174 Two debates between the candidates were organized between the two rounds and they were central events of the campaign. The first debate was organized by the two campaign headquarters of the candidates, outside the traditional media framework, where, in accordance with the agreement between two candidates, a moderator was excluded, and candidates were posing questions to each other. This provoked criticism by the Press Council, as well as the President of the Audiovisual Council (see Media section). The TV debate took place on 27 October, at the premises of the Palace of the Republic and [broadcasted](#) live on TV Moldova 1 and Facebook page of the Moldpress Agency.

175 Ibid.

176 [Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE](#) (1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document), paragraph 5.4. "the participating states agree on [...] a clear separation between the State and political parties; in particular, political parties will not be merged with the State". As per the Venice Commission [Code on Good Practice on Referendums \(CDL-AD\(2022\)015](#) "Administrative authorities must observe throughout the campaign period their duty of neutrality [...] which is one of the means of ensuring that voters can form an opinion freely."

To ensure a level playing field, the Government and state bodies should avoid activities related to referendum topics during the campaign. In the absence of legal obligations for neutrality, they are encouraged to adopt practices aligned with international standards to promote fairness and impartiality.

Several interlocutors of the mission further mentioned allegations of misuse of administrative resources, such as the involvement of public employees in campaign activities during working hours and in collecting signatures for certain candidates.

Allegations of misuse of administrative resources should be thoroughly investigated to maintain fairness and prevent any undue advantage for ruling parties or candidates.

In addition to the officially registered candidates for the presidential race and parties campaigning for the referendum, the mission observed directly or was informed of activities by unregistered third parties. These groups, although not formally registered to campaign, actively engaged in efforts to promote messages related to both the referendum and the presidential elections. There are no legal provisions regulating third party campaigning in Moldova. The mission observed a number of third parties running paid advertising on Meta's social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram), despite not being directly connected to any officially registered contestant.¹⁷⁷ However, as the campaign progressed, Meta ramped up its efforts and successfully dismantled a significant part of the disinformation network aimed at influencing public opinion on the 20 October elections.¹⁷⁸

Legal provisions to regulate third-party campaigning must be introduced, ensuring transparency and accountability in electoral processes and preventing unregistered entities from influencing elections without oversight.

Social media platforms should improve transparency by requiring clear labeling of political advertisements and implementing stricter controls on paid content from unregistered third parties.

177 A number of these pages were removed for not following Meta's advertising standards and the ads are not visible anymore. Thirteen of these Facebook pages seen by ENEMO have spent some 50,000 Euro throughout the campaigning period against the Referendum and the ruling party or its candidate. On the other hand, three Facebook pages were found by ENEMO to have spent throughout the campaigning period, some 18,000 Euro in advertising in support of the Referendum / highlighting benefits of the European Union. Many of these pages had active advertising on election day and the day before, during the period of electoral silence.

178 The network employed fake identities and fabricated Russian-language news brands to disseminate biased information favoring Russia and criticizing the European Union. Meta found that the network was run by individuals from Russia and Moldova, working together from the Transnistrian region. The fictitious brands, such as "Tresh Kich," "Moldovan Mole," "Insider Moldova," and "Gagauzia on Air," posed as independent news outlets but were spreading disinformation. According to media reports, until 11 October, the company removed a total of 7 Facebook accounts, 23 pages, 1 group, and 20 Instagram accounts. See [here](#).

The greatest threat to the electoral and referendum campaigns came from the illegal and malign interference of fugitive convicted businessman Ilan Shor, currently residing in the Russian Federation, who operated through a widespread network within the country. His activities included large-scale vote-buying schemes and public calls urging citizens to vote in a certain way in exchange for money or other rewards.¹⁷⁹ These schemes were designed to deliberately undermine not only the integrity of the election process and illegally influence voters' choice,¹⁸⁰ but also to destabilize the country's institutional system.

As reported by institutional interlocutors, these and other actions became the subject of intensive investigation by Moldovan authorities, both before¹⁸¹ and during the first round of elections. The police and Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office made efforts to counter these schemes, including the seizure of electoral materials, financial assets, and the detention of individuals involved in alleged criminal activities, starting before the first round. The efforts continued between the two rounds, with law enforcement authorities stepping up their actions to combat voter corruption. Investigations were intensified (see Campaign Finance section below), and a broad campaign was launched to inform citizens about the consequences of vote-buying.

Authorities should take stronger actions to counter malign interference, including by increasing vigilance over illegal vote-buying schemes, foreign financing, and other forms of external influence, ensuring robust legal responses to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and the stability of the country's institutions.

The EOM noted the involvement of the clergy from the Russian Orthodox Church in promoting several candidates during the first round of the campaign, as reported by both interlocutors and the media.¹⁸² Several interlocutors, including political parties, also mentioned various forms of engagement by members of the clergy, including the use of political messages during official and unofficial activities, and reports of illegal political

179 One of these attempts consisted in a video address on the Telegram platform, since removed, where Ilan Shor invited citizens to join his network for 500 LEI, and that after successfully voting he would pay them an additional 5000 LEI in return.

180 The police sent warnings to citizens through various channels, including text messages to mobile numbers, prerecorded audio messages to landline phones, audio messages in public transportation and various stores, written messages on cable TV, etc., warning them to report all attempts to buy votes in the second round of the presidential elections on 3 November. Content of police SMS to citizens: "Dear citizens, be aware of electoral fraud. If someone tries to corrupt you, call the Police. Offering money leads to a fine of 57,000 lei or imprisonment for up to 5 years, receiving money - a fine of 37,500 lei"

181 At a press conference held on 3 October, the Head of the General Police Inspectorate, Mr. Viorel Cernateanu, and the Head of the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, Ms. Veronica Dragalin, presented the results of a criminal investigation regarding schemes for illegal financing and vote buying. The entire scheme was organized through payments to a network of 130 coordinators and 130,000 citizens of Moldova, who were receiving approximately 100 EURO on their accounts through the application of Russian owned PSB bank (Promsvyazbank), in return for voting for a certain candidate and voting "No" in the referendum. The entire scheme discovered was worth approximately 15 million USD, with 130 coordinators receiving 45 thousand LEI monthly. See [here](#).

182 The speeches and addressing of the clergy at the event with opposition politicians and candidates involved. Event was organized by the Russian Church in the Republic of Moldova, on 6 October, during a so-called "Peace March". See [here](#).

financing. There were also reports of clergy members spreading negative messages about the incumbent President during church services and other campaign-related activities. This involvement continued in the second round.¹⁸³ A 2016 Constitutional Court ruling affirmed that religious cults' participation in elections is unconstitutional.¹⁸⁴ The issue was also mentioned in the 28 November Decision of the Constitutional Court confirming the validity of the elections (see Background and Post-Election Developments Section).

Authorities should take proactive measures to ensure strict adherence to the 2016 Constitutional Court ruling, which prohibits religious cults from participating in electoral campaigns. The legal framework should be reinforced to effectively prevent the influence of religious institutions in elections or political life of the country.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign finance is mainly regulated by Chapter V of the Electoral Code.¹⁸⁵ The legal framework is further elaborated through CEC regulations, including the Regulation on the Financing of Political Parties and the Regulation on the Financing of Initiative Groups and Electoral Campaigns, both adopted in August 2023.

The legal framework for campaign finance mostly aligns with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO). Significant changes to the legal framework for campaign finance have been made since the last presidential elections, particularly with the adoption of the new Electoral Code in 2022. These reforms aimed to better align the regulations with international standards and the recommendations of the Venice Commission and GRECO, and both international and domestic observers. Key changes included provisions on stricter oversight of donor income, clearer financial reporting requirements, and more detailed guidelines for the CEC's control and supervision of campaign financing.

Electoral contestants in the presidential elections were required to open a dedicated bank account, known as the "Electoral Fund", within three days of their registration and to notify the CEC within 24 hours. Transfers from this Fund could only occur after the candidate's registration, but no earlier than 30 days before the Election Day. Some of the presidential candidates informed the EOM that they faced difficulties opening bank accounts. This included unexplained rejections by banks of their requests to open a dedicated account, unexplained extension of the deadlines for opening their accounts, etc. These issues emphasize the previously mentioned problem of overlapping deadlines for registration of candidates and the start of the campaign (see Section on Candidate Registration).

¹⁸³ The police sanctioned the bishop of Bălți and Fălești, Marchel, who received a fine for propaganda in the church. The Metropolitan of Chisinau and all of Moldova publicly met candidate Alexander Stoianoglo on the last day of the campaign.

¹⁸⁴ Constitutional Court,

¹⁸⁵ Other applicable laws include the 2007 Law on Political Parties, the 2002 Criminal Code, the 2008 Contravention Code, and the 2022 Law on Advertising.

Consideration could be given to electoral authorities working with financial institutions and the National Bank of Moldova to ensure a smooth and transparent process for candidates to open bank accounts. The banks should promptly inform the National Bank regarding the non-opening of the account for a contestant, which should be the case only when justified. Any unexplained rejections or delays in account openings should be investigated to avoid unfair obstacles for candidates.

Candidates were required to appoint a treasurer responsible for managing their campaign account. The banks provided the CEC with daily electronic reports on all transactions, while candidates had to submit an initial financial report within three days of opening the account, followed by weekly reports through the CEC's electronic "Financial Control" system. The final financial report was due within three days after Election Day, and the CEC had the obligation to publish all reports within 24 hours of receiving them. Several ENEMO interlocutors among electoral contestants expressed concerns that the enhanced financial reporting requirements are burdensome and time consuming, especially for smaller parties and independent presidential candidates lacking professional party infrastructure.

Consideration could be given to the CEC providing additional support and resources to smaller parties and independent candidates to help them meet enhanced financial reporting requirements. This could include offering guidance, simplified reporting processes, or access to professional assistance, ensuring that all contestants, regardless of their size or resources, can comply with regulations without undue burden. The CEC must be properly staffed and supported to ensure that it can efficiently oversee campaign finance.

Candidates could finance their campaigns through various sources, including their own funds, transfers from party accounts (which may include public funding from the state budget, membership fees, donations,¹⁸⁶ and zero-interest loans). In-kind donations, free services, and voluntary activities had to be reported at their market value, while cash donations had to be deposited directly into the "Electoral Fund."

The CEC is the main body responsible for receiving, overseeing, and controlling financial reports on campaign financing. In cases of non-compliance with campaign finance regulations, the CEC has a range of enforcement measures. These include issuing warnings, suspending candidates' free or paid airtime for 24 to 48 hours, and withholding state budget funds. More serious penalties can involve contravention sanctions, and in the most severe cases, the de-registration of the electoral contestant. Despite being understaffed, the CEC managed the supervision of campaign finance timely and efficiently.

¹⁸⁶ Citizens were allowed to donate to one or more electoral contestants, with donations limited to six average monthly wages or no more than 30% of their annual income from the previous year, capped at 82,200 MDL (13,700 MDL x 6 months). For public servants, officials, those with special status, or employees subject to Law No. 133/2016 on the declaration of personal assets, donations were restricted to 10% of their annual income, but no more than six average monthly wages. Legal entities could have contributed up to twelve average monthly wages, capped at 164,400 MDL for 2024.

According to the CEC, no significant delays or violations in financial reporting were noted. However, several candidates were sanctioned with warnings on the basis of minor infringements, while one presidential candidate was sanctioned by deprivation of air time for 48 hours, due to omitting to report part of direct campaign costs.¹⁸⁷ In addition, the amount of sanctions towards several electoral contestants increased as Election Day drew nearer. The party “For the Future of Moldova” which was supporting presidential candidate Mr. Vasil Tarlev,¹⁸⁸ and the Party of Communists, which was registered as a participant in the Referendum¹⁸⁹ were sanctioned with 12 months of suspension of funding from state funds.

In May 2021, the Supreme Security Council recommended that the CEC establish an inter-agency working group to detect and investigate illegal campaign financing.¹⁹⁰ This was implemented during the 2023 local elections and re-established for the 2024 presidential elections. However, CEC representatives informed the mission that the group did not hold official sessions but operated through direct communication among members when inter-agency cooperation was needed. The CEC noted the lack of formal procedures or regulations governing cooperation within the group. While some institutions expressed satisfaction with the collaboration, this informal approach risks relying on personal or institutional relationships, potentially undermining effective cooperation in the future.

Formal procedures and regulatory frameworks should be established for inter-agency cooperation in detecting and investigating illegal campaign financing.

The social and political landscape continues to be influenced by third parties, including foreign entities and groups involved in illegal or harmful activities, undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law. Many ENEMO interlocutors raised concerns about “shadow funding” in electoral campaigns, particularly from foreign sources and illicit groups, often through cash, prepaid cards, cryptocurrencies, or bank transfers. Despite efforts by Moldovan institutions to increase transparency and combat these illegal activities, officials acknowledged that resources and capacities remain insufficient

187 Presidential candidates Andrei Nastase, Victoria Fortuna, Irina Vlah, Natalia Morari and the Party for the Future of Moldova who supports candidate Vasile Tarlev have been sanctioned with the warning, while the candidate Tudor Ulianoschi was sanctioned by deprivation of the free airtime on media with the national coverage for 48 hours. These sanctions were published on 12 October 2024. See the [CEC webpage](#).

188 The Central Election Commission identified multiple financial violations by the Political Party “For the Future of Moldova”, including unpaid debts for campaign materials exceeding 1 percent of the total amount that could be transferred in the Electoral Fund account. In its [Decision](#), the CEC noted that when goods are delivered to an electoral competitor without upfront payment, it undermines transparency by effectively constituting an inadmissible donation or loan, which is a violation punishable by the deregistration of the election contestant. However, it decided not to apply this extreme measure but to deprive the party of state funds for 12 months instead, while also notifying the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office on the case.

189 PCRМ used the funds from the referendum campaign to criticize the incumbent president, which the CEC deemed de facto campaigning for the Presidential Elections.

190 Consisting of representatives of the CEC, National Inspectorate of Police, Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office, National Anticorruption Centre, Public Services Agency, The Service for Information Technology and Cyber Security (STISC), Service for Information and security (SIS) and other relevant bodies.

to effectively address the issue. However, there is a strong interest in strengthening international cooperation and sharing best practices to improve prevention and response.

The capacities of the authorities to combat shadow and illicit financing of election campaigns should be strengthened, by increasing resources, improving training, and bolstering the capabilities of relevant institutions. Efforts should prioritize enhancing transparency in campaign financing, with a particular focus on identifying and preventing illicit funding from foreign sources and illegal groups.

Political parties that contested both the presidential election and the referendum were obliged to have separate funds and accounts, with separate processes and documentation for reporting to the institutions. ENEMO deems that in the case of a referendum being held at the same time as another general election, the two campaigns should have been clearly separated. Two parties, PAS and Electoral Bloc "Together", were the only political entities which had the potential for additional benefits from double campaigning, since they were the only ones registered both for referendum and presidential election campaigning. Both parties and respective presidential candidates supported by them followed the rules in terms of financial reporting.

VII. MEDIA

The Constitution of Moldova¹⁹¹ ensures the right of access to information, while the Law on Freedom of Expression (LFE)¹⁹² incorporates the provisions on freedom of expression outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and European Convention on Human Rights. The Criminal Code¹⁹³ provides penalties for the intentional violation of laws related to access to information, obstruction of media activity, intimidation of journalists for criticism, and censorship. Additionally, the Contravention Code (Article 71) provides legal remedies for the violation of the right of access to information. The Audiovisual Media Services Code (AMSC)¹⁹⁴ ensures accurate information, editorial independence, regulatory autonomy, pluralism, and protects the national audiovisual space. The Code prohibits broadcasting content that “incites hatred, disinformation, propaganda of military aggression, extremist content, content of terrorist nature or that presents a threat to national security”¹⁹⁵. Legal liabilities for spreading false and defamatory information are provided in the LFE (chapter 2, section 1) and the Contravention Code (Article 70).

The coverage of election campaigns and referendum in the audiovisual media is regulated by the Electoral Code,¹⁹⁶ as well as the corresponding CEC regulation¹⁹⁷ and decision.¹⁹⁸ Journalists accredited by mass media institutions and confirmed by the CEC are granted access to electoral body meetings, electoral operations, and electoral information. Compliance with the regulation by the audiovisual service providers was monitored by the Audiovisual Council (AVC), which issued specific guidelines for media coverage of the presidential election and constitutional referendum.¹⁹⁹ Additionally, the AVC was responsible for addressing media-related complaints.

A high number of media outlets operate in the country. In Moldova there are currently 56 TV channels (40 with national coverage) and 61 radio stations (six with national coverage).²⁰⁰ 19 TV stations²⁰¹ (one being regional national channels) and 12 radio

191 The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Article 34.

192 [Law on Freedom of Expression](#).

193 [Criminal Code](#), Article 180, 1801, 1802.

194 [Code of Audiovisual Media Services](#).

195 The Audiovisual Media Services Code, Article 17 (3).

196 Election Code, Articles 89 and 90.

197 CEC [Regulation No. 1137/2023](#) (28.07.2023) For the approval of the Regulation regarding the reflection of the elections by mass media institutions.

198 CEC [Decision No. 2660](#) (31.07.2024) - regarding the particularities of media coverage of the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova and the republican constitutional referendum of 20 October, 2024.

199 Audiovisual Council (03.10.2024) [Guidelines regarding media coverage of the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova and the republican constitutional referendum of October 20, 2024.](#)

200 Audio-Visual Council, [Register of providers of sound broadcasting media services](#).

201 Axial requested the AVC on 3 October to exclude them from the list of media covering the electoral campaign, as they were unable to provide election-related news.

stations expressed²⁰² their intent to cover the electoral process, as prescribed by the Electoral Code.²⁰³

The Audiovisual Council monitored the coverage of 19 television channels, from 20 September to 1 November.²⁰⁴ The Council issued six weekly reports, two reports for each period of day of silence and two final reports for the presidential elections and for the referendum. Also, the Audiovisual Media Council reviewed and addressed seven appeals from presidential candidates and referendum participants.²⁰⁵

In accordance with the Electoral Code,²⁰⁶ all reports of the AVC were published on the official website, within the deadline, in a special section dedicated to elections and were sent to the CEC.

Findings of the AVC did not identify significant reporting biases, violations, or trends in reporting that could have been significantly detrimental or favoring certain presidential candidates. Even though the monitoring found some violations, most of the rules stipulated within the Electoral Code were generally respected. For the identified violations the AVC applied 5 public warnings and 53 fines in the amount of 301,000 lei in total.²⁰⁷ ENEMO assesses that the work of the AVC provided a solid foundation for

202 Audio-Visual Council, [Editorial Policy Statements for Coverage of the Presidential Election and Republican Constitutional Referendum of October 20, 2024](#).

31 TV stations and 42 radio stations officially declared non-participation in covering the elections and referendum. (Audiovisual Council (09.08.2024) Decision No. 208 On the examination of notifications regarding the non-reflection of the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova and the republican constitutional referendum of October 20, 2024)

203 Article 90 (5), Within the first 7 days of the start of the electoral period, the media services providers declared to the AVC their editorial policies for election coverage or that they would not cover the elections.

204 "Moldova 1", "TV-Găgăuzia", "Pro TV Chişinău", "Canal Regional", "ATV", "Exclusiv TV", "Jurnal TV", "TVC 21", "TV8", "TVR Moldova", "Cinema 1", "N4", "SOR TV", "Drochia TV", "Media TV", "Axial TV", "TV Elita", "Studio L" and "R Live TV".

205 The complaints were addressed in the following decisions: Decision No. 243 of October 2, 2024 (petitioner: "PCRM" – media services: "Jurnal TV"); Decision No. 244 of October 2, 2024 (petitioner: Renato Usatîi – media services: "Moldova 1" and "Radio Moldova"); Decision No. 249 of October 4, 2024 (petitioner: Igor Serotila, representative of candidate Octavian Țicu – media services: "Moldova 1" and "Radio Moldova"); Decision No. 264 of October 18, 2024 (petitioner: Natalia Morari – media service: "Jurnal TV"); Decision No. 266 of October 23, 2024 (petitioner: Natalia Morari – media service: "Jurnal TV"); and Decision No. 287 of November 8, 2024 (petitioner: Igor Dodon – media service: "Moldova 1").

206 Article 90 (16).

207 The most common violations were for presenting impartial and not balanced reporting on electoral campaigns (nine AMS ("Moldova 1", "TV Găgăuzia", "TVC 21", "Jurnal TV", "Exclusiv TV", "N4", "Elita TV", "Cinema 1", "TVR Moldova") were fined with a total of 62,000 lei (in the range of 5,000-10,000), (Decision no. [289](#) (18.11.2024)); for violating the day of silence (Five media outlets were sanctioned by the AVC on both rounds: First time fine of 5,000 lei was issued to "TV8", "Jurnal TV", "Moldova 1", "PRO TV Chişinău", and "R Live TV", while a fine of 6,000 lei was imposed for repeated violations, except for "Moldova 1", which received a higher fine of 9,000 lei as a public media service provider. During the second round, as a first-time offender, "TVR Moldova" received a 5,000 lei fine. Canal Regional was fined 15,000 lei for broadcasting electoral advertisements on the day of silence of the first round; for failing to report to the AVC in a timely manner the election-related content presented outside of electoral programs (Four media - "PRO TV Chişinău", "Canal Regional", "Jurnal TV", and "TVR Moldova" were fined 5,000 lei each); and for broadcasting opinion polls incorrectly (five AMS - "Canal Regional", "Media TV", "TV Elita", "Moldova 1", and "Cinema 1", were fined with 5,000 lei each).

balancing the audiovisual media scene and helped maintain a relatively even playing field in audiovisual media during the electoral campaign.

The AVC monitoring showed that, as stipulated in the Electoral Code Article 90 (7), 12 out of 19 AMSs used the provision of providing free airtime (5 minutes) in the first 15 days of the electoral campaign (September 20 – October 04) to the political parties/ bloc and independent candidates. On average five AMSs presented programs of five competitors.

According to independent media monitoring by domestic civil society organizations,²⁰⁸ most of the coverage of the candidates was neutral. However, several TV channels displayed partiality, particularly as the second round of the presidential elections approached, providing more negative coverage of the incumbent president, Maia Sandu.²⁰⁹ At the same time, on some channels, the incumbent benefited from positive coverage of the government and the ruling party. More criticism was directed at the public broadcaster, which Alexandr Stoianoglo even boycotted during the debate period leading up to the second round. However, the quantitative analysis by the AVC does not support this claim. The quantitative analysis shows that Maia Sandu received longer duration and high frequency of coverage on television, but not significantly.

Media outlets and journalists should adhere to journalistic ethics and ensure balanced and impartial election coverage, providing citizens with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding the elections and referendums.

During the electoral period, nine audiovisual media services broadcasted 62 electoral debates, of which 36 targeted the presidential elections (34 debates – in the first round and 2 debates – in the second round).²¹⁰ More than a quarter of the debates were attended by representatives of the presidential candidates and not the candidates themselves. In the first round of presidential elections, the incumbent president did not attend any of the debates. Also, the mission noticed that some online media²¹¹ organized debates and invited the presidential candidates as well.

To ensure voters are well-informed, it is crucial for politicians to actively participate in debates organized by audiovisual media outlets and adhere to the proposed debate formats. Given the large number of such media platforms, candidates should prioritize engaging in at least a selection of these debates to provide voters with meaningful opportunities to assess their programs, policies, and qualifications.

The mission received information that some small local audiovisual media outlets opted to avoid covering the elections due to the perceived burden of reporting requirements

208 The provided by the Independent Journalism Center (IJC) monitored following media: Cinema 1, Exclusiv TV, Gagauziya Radio Televizionu (GRT), Jurnal TV, Moldova 1, N4, Pro TV Chisinau, TVC 21, TVR Moldova, TV8.

209 Exclusive TV, GRT, and TVC 21, especially in their electoral programs.

210 Audiovisual Council (18.12.2024) Final Report on the coverage of the presidential elections

211 IPN, Nord News and Bas-TV.

and the complexity of regulations. This avoidance negatively affected the quality and diversity of information available to voters.

Consideration could be given to simplifying reporting requirements and regulations for small local audiovisual media outlets, to reduce undue burdens. Additionally, efforts should be made to support these outlets through capacity-building initiatives, including training and resources, to encourage their active participation in covering elections.

The presidential elections saw only one debate between the incumbent president and her opponent in the second round. This debate, held on 27 October,²¹² was broadcast by 12 AMSs.²¹³ It was organized independently of traditional media and was self-initiated by the electoral subjects. The president of the Audiovisual Council criticized this decision underlining that the electoral legislation recognizes only debates that are organized by media providers. The Press Council,²¹⁴ also, issued a statement condemning an attempt of the candidates to interfere with the prerogative of media service providers to determine the terms and content of the debates, as prescribed by the CEC regulations.²¹⁵ However, the CEC did not publicly comment on this matter nor were there any complaints filed about it.

As reported by the AVC, the topic of the referendum was least discussed in the traditional media. According to the monitoring report, the share of the referendum topic was only 6.1% in the election news. Also, not all the parties registered with the CEC for campaigning for the referendum benefited from free airtime provided by the law. In total, there were 26 debates organized on the topic of the referendum on nine television channels. Both the CEC and AVC confirmed to the mission that particular attention was dedicated to monitoring the eventual overlap of the two campaigns, for Presidential candidates not registered for the Referendum, both in media and campaign activities. Some exemptions were made for media, where one third of candidates or their representatives' airtime broadcasted on TV or radio could be dedicated to discussing EU and foreign policy issues which might overlap with the referendum.

In case of future referendums held concurrently with a general election, media outlets should take proactive steps to extensively cover the referendum, facilitating public discussions and providing comprehensive information to ensure voters are well-informed.

During the campaign, ENEMO observed the use of online platforms and social media to spread false narratives about the EU, undermining democratic institutions and the electoral process. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Moldovan authorities have

212 Presidential election debate (27.10.2024), see [here](#).

213 Moldova 1", "TVR Moldova", "Jurnal TV", "Canal Regional", "TV8", "PRO TV Chişinău", "TV-Găgăuzia", "N4", "R Live TV", "TVC 21", "Cinema 1" and "Exclusiv TV".

214 Press Council (23.10.2024) Statement of the Press Council on the Debates for the Presidential Elections see [here](#).

215 CEC Decision No. 1137 of 28-07-2023 for the approval of the Regulation on the coverage of elections by media institutions outlines in Chapter IV the terms and conditions for organizing electoral debates.

restricted certain media outlets²¹⁶ and blocked websites spreading disinformation.²¹⁷ On 10 October 2024, Telegram, at the INI's request, blocked 15 channels and 95 chatbots involved in disinformation, illegal political financing, and vote-buying.²¹⁸

Social media platforms must strengthen their monitoring mechanisms to detect and remove disinformation and any unauthorized political content in real time during election periods in all countries. Social media companies should collaborate more closely with local authorities and independent observers to ensure that any disinformation campaigns or illegal electoral interference are swiftly identified and removed.

216 Between 2022-2023, the Commission of Exceptional Situations (CES) effort to counter disinformation resulted among others in suspending the broadcast licenses of 12 TV stations (6 in December 2022 and another 6 in November 202) on the allegation of spreading false information.

217 The latest case being of October 3, when the Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) banned five Russian websites ahead of the election, with a reasoning of "national security risks".

218 Among the blocked channels were the channels of Ilan Șor, his political bloc - Victoria-Pobeda, and of his associates - Marina Tauber, Evghenia Guțul, and Vasile Bolea.

VIII. GENDER REPRESENTATION

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova Article 16(2) guarantees equality under the law and by public authorities, regardless of sex. Moldova is a party to key international conventions on gender equality, including the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Additionally, the Parliament of Moldova adopted the Law on Ensuring Equality²¹⁹ and established the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality²²⁰ in 2013.

Moldova has implemented gender representation policies, including a minimum 40% gender quota²²¹ to enhance women's participation in Parliamentary and Local Elections. However, the law does not require political parties to maintain gender balance when replacing elected MPs, potentially undermining the effectiveness of these measures.²²² In addition, the legislation includes obligations and financial incentives to political parties, aiming to support gender representation.²²³

Currently, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova consists of 40% women (above the EU average), while at the local level the share of elected women councilors is 33.3% and women mayors make up 24%.²²⁴ Of the 16 government ministers, only six are women,²²⁵ with one serving as Deputy Prime Minister among three others. Notably, the President of the Republic, serving her second term after reelection on 3 November, is a woman. In the 20 October presidential election, four out of eleven candidates were women.

While the Electoral Code Article 17(5) emphasizes the need to adhere to the principle of gender equality in the establishment of EMBs, no specific requirements are set to enforce this principle. However, women are well represented in Election Management Bodies (EMBs). Five of the nine members of the Central Election Commission, including the Chairperson and the Secretary, are women. Gender representation in these bodies, such as District Electoral Councils (DECs) and Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEBs), often favors women. During the first round of the election, ENEMO observers reported that

²¹⁹ [Law No. 121 on Ensuring Equality](#).

²²⁰ See the [website](#) of the Equality Council.

²²¹ Election Code Article 68, paragraph 3.

²²² The gender composition in the Parliament of Moldova has fluctuated since its establishment (41 women in 2021, 36 in 2022, and 39 in 2023).

²²³ Since 2019, the Law on Political Parties Article 28 (21) prescribes for those political parties that receive financing from the state budget to allocate 20% of the state funds for promoting and encouraging the participation of women in the political and electoral processes. In addition, the Article 27 1d, 1e stipulates for allocation of 7.5% from the amount of 0.1% of the state budget revenues "to political parties in proportion to the women actually elected in the parliamentary elections" and "... elected in the local elections".

²²⁴ As of the election results of 2023 local elections.

²²⁵ The Government composition was reshuffled shortly after the elections, adding three women. During elections the Government included three women, one of whom served as Deputy Prime Minister.

89% of PEB members and 71% of DEC members were women, with 60% of chairperson positions held by women.

Despite advancements in women's political representation in Moldova, patriarchal attitudes about women in politics and leadership remain deeply entrenched in society.²²⁶ The Mission noted that sexist remarks by politicians, including candidates, were predominantly directed at the incumbent president. These remarks, often framed through humor or irony, but sometimes as personal insults, sought to perpetuate harmful stereotypes about women's perceived inability to lead effectively.

Political parties must actively promote gender equality in political discourse, including by condemning and addressing sexist remarks targeting women in leadership positions. Additionally, public awareness campaigns could be developed to challenge and dismantle patriarchal stereotypes about women in politics and leadership, while fostering a more inclusive and respectful political environment.

The topic of sexual minorities was also used to mislead voters, especially in the context of the constitutional referendum.²²⁷ It was observed that some candidates used gender stereotypes and prejudices in their electoral speeches that reinforced hatred towards minorities and the LGBTQA+ community.

Political candidates and parties should refrain from using discriminatory language or perpetuating harmful stereotypes about sexual minorities in their campaigns. Additionally, authorities should promote and properly enforce regulations that prevent hate speech and encourage respect for diversity, fostering a more inclusive and tolerant electoral environment.

226 Platform for Gender Equality (10.12.2024) Monitoring report on sexist discourse and behavior in the media in the Republic of Moldova - 2024 Presidential Elections.

227 Igor Dodon was stating that the ruling party is intending the employment quotas for the LGBTI community; Renato Usati on "banning LGBT propaganda in schools.

IX. NATIONAL MINORITIES

In alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international legal acts on human rights, including the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, Moldova adopted the law “On the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and to the legal status of their organizations” in 2001.²²⁸ Additionally, the Republic of Moldova ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination on 26 January 1993.

According to the 2014 census, 75.1 percent of Moldova’s population identifies themselves as Moldovans, 7.0 percent – Romanians, 6.6 percent – Ukrainians, 4.6 percent – Gagauz, 4.1 percent – Russians, 1.9 percent – Bulgarians, 0.3 percent – Roma, while the other ethnicities represented 0.5 percent out of the total population. 76.6 percent of ballots printed for the voters in Moldova were printed in Romanian language, 23 percent in Russian; 3,400 ballots were printed in Gagauz language, 991 in Bulgarian, 870 in Romani, and 115 in Ukrainian. The ballots delivered for the polling stations serving the voters from the left bank of Transnistria were printed equally in Romanian and Russian languages.

The CEC website offers Russian and English language versions, besides the Romanian one, but they are not updated consistently. Training materials for election officials were also available in minority languages, as were voter education resources.

Organizations representing the interests of various national minorities²²⁹ remain active members of the Coordinating Council of Ethno-cultural Organizations. This council operates under the Agency for Interethnic Relations, as established by Article 25 of Law No. 382/2001.

Three out of eleven presidential candidates had mentioned supporting the rights of the ethnic minorities and supporting interethnic relations in their campaign materials. Many of the candidates communicated with the voters, including verbally and in written materials, in both Romanian and Russian languages.

In between the election rounds the presidential candidate Stoianoglo, an ethnic Gagauz, filed a complaint to various institutions to address the hate speech circulating in the social media, defaming, and discriminating against him in the context of the electoral campaign. The posts underlined the ethnic belonging of Stoianoglo. The Equality Council ruled the case being inadmissible and forwarded it to the Chişinău Police Directorate for consideration under the Contravention Code.²³⁰ However, the Council issued a public statement urging electoral competitors and their supporters to use respectful language

²²⁸ [Law No. 382](#) of 19-07-2001 “On the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and the legal status of their organizations”

²²⁹ Including Ukrainian, Russian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Jewish, Roma, Polish, Belarusian, German, Armenian, Azeri, Georgian, Ossetian, Lithuanian, Estonian, and Greek communities.

²³⁰ Equality Council (25.10.2024) [Decision on the case no. 234/24](#).

towards political opponents and called on the media institutions and journalists to avoid spreading hate speech and report sensitive topics responsibly.²³¹ The campaign staff of President Maia Sandu, also, condemned xenophobic remarks made online and criticized “incitement to division and hatred” and calling on everyone to cease such unacceptable behavior (see also the Section on Electoral Campaign).

On October 29, the Equality Council informed the public about four appeals made regarding hate speech and incitement to discrimination in connection with the second round of elections.²³² The Council ruled that the police are responsible for examining and ascertaining facts related to incitement to discrimination. Additionally, the Council underscored the need for political parties, candidates, and media outlets to implement and endorse code of conduct aimed at preventing discrimination and addressing the use of discriminatory language.

Political parties and candidates should adopt and enforce clear codes of conduct prohibiting hate speech and discriminatory remarks during campaigns. Electoral authorities and relevant institutions should monitor and address such behavior promptly.

231 Equality Council (22.10.2024) The Equality Council urges electoral competitors and their supporters to use balanced public discourse, see [here](#).

232 Equality Council (29.10.2024) The Equality Council informs public opinion, see [here](#).

X. INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Republic of Moldova is a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Since 2012, the legislative body has adopted the Law on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities,²³³ ensuring their right to participate in all areas of life. There are more than 162 thousand people with disabilities living in the Republic of Moldova. Of these, more than eleven thousand are minors.²³⁴

The CEC and the Center for Continuous Electoral Training (CICDE) actively collaborate with domestic civic organizations and international donor organizations to improve accessibility for voters with special needs. Their efforts include producing voter information materials in Braille, equipping polling stations with assistive devices for visually impaired voters and providing sign language interpreters to ensure voters with hearing impairments receive timely voter education and information about election results while streaming the CEC sessions.

The CEC established accessibility criteria for polling stations and other electoral process participants to uphold the electoral rights of people with disabilities. To monitor compliance, after each election, the CEC conducts assessments of polling stations in coordination with the permanent chairpersons of district electoral commissions. While local public authorities are responsible for the accessibility of buildings housing polling stations, CEC data reveals that only 1% of these buildings—mostly in Chisinau—are fully accessible.²³⁵

During elections, voters with disabilities can request assistance to vote at home via mobile ballot boxes. For those choosing to vote at polling stations, the CEC ensures lower-level voting booths designed for wheelchair users.

Individuals placed under protective measures by a court decision are excluded from the right to vote in Moldova, contrary to international standards²³⁶ and previous ENEMO recommendations (see also the Section on Voter Registration).

While ENEMO acknowledges the efforts of the authorities to provide persons living with disabilities equal opportunities to fully exercise their political rights, they still face

²³³ Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (30.03.2012) [Law Nr. 60](#) on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

²³⁴ Data shared to the Mission by Infonet from the National Office of Social Insurance of the Republic of Moldova.

²³⁵ The CEC [website](#).

²³⁶ Paragraph 48 of General Comment No. 1(2014) to Article 12 of the CRPD states that "a person's decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising their political rights, including the right to vote, the right to stand for election and the right to serve as a member of a jury".

a number of barriers and more should be done in this regard.

ENEMO strongly recommends that all public authorities take proactive measures to ensure that public buildings commonly used as polling stations are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities and special physical needs, in line with human rights standards.

Prior to the start of the electoral campaigns for the presidential elections and the constitutional referendum, the Audiovisual Council instructed audiovisual media services to align their editorial policies for election and referendum coverage with the provisions of normative acts ensuring access for persons with visual and hearing impairments to audiovisual media services. This included adhering to the regulations of the CEC²³⁷ and the AVC.²³⁸ The adherence to these provisions were monitored by the AVC. These documents provide specific and detailed criteria for audiovisual media, which were not always followed.²³⁹ The AVC fined seven media service providers²⁴⁰ with 5,000 lei each for not providing at least one weekly edition on elections for people with visual or hearing disabilities, as indicated in the point 43 of the CEC Decision No.1137.

ENEMO urges the audiovisual service providers to update their technical capacities to ensure that voters with impaired hearing can receive all information to make an informed decision.

In some of its sessions leading up to the first round Election Day, the CEC provided sign language interpretation. The CEC also equipped polling stations with accessible voting booths for persons with disabilities (PwDs), Braille ballot templates, magnifying lenses, and secret booths for homebound voting. These measures contributed to improved accessibility for voters with disabilities in the electoral process.

237 CEC [Regulation No. 1137/2023 \(28.07.2023\)](#) For the approval of the Regulation regarding the reflection of the elections by mass media institutions.

238 Audiovisual Council (01.03.2024) [Decision No. 61](#) Regarding the approval of the Regulation on audiovisual contents.

239 Point 45 in the CEC decision No.1137 and Chapter VI in the Decision No.61 of the AVC have established that "audiovisual programs of an electoral nature intended for people with special needs are broadcast in such a way that, in the case of ensuring simultaneous interpretation in sign language, the image of the face and hands of the person performing the interpretation is at least 1/3 of the screen. In the case of ensuring content titling, the titles must be of an easily readable size, be scrolled in accordance with the essence of the content and the images broadcast, and be placed above the mobile titles, bullet points and/or crawls, so as not to affect them. In the case of ensuring content titling, the titles must be of an easily readable size, be run in accordance with the essence of the content and images broadcast, and be placed above mobile titles, bullet points and/or crawls."

240 240 "PRO TV Chişinău," "Canal Regional," "ATV," "TVC 21," "TV-Drochia," "Axial TV," and "Studio-L"

XI. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The right to complaint is primarily regulated by the Electoral Code and the secondary legislation adopted by the CEC.²⁴¹ The 2022 Electoral Code addressed inconsistencies and conflicting provisions regarding the authorities responsible for resolving election disputes, in line with previous ENEMO recommendations. The legal framework categorizes election-related cases into three primary forms: disputes, administrative offenses as subject of criminal liability under the Contravention Code,²⁴² and criminal offenses under the Criminal Code.²⁴³

Complaints can be filed by voters, observers, candidates, initiative groups, party blocs, and electoral contestants regarding the actions, inactions, or decisions of election management bodies (EMBs). Such complaints may be submitted to the next higher-level electoral body. Additionally, complaints about the actions or inactions of other contestants must be filed with the electoral body that registered them - the CEC in the case of presidential elections and referendums. Decisions of the CEC can be challenged at the Chisinau Court of Appeals, and rulings by the Court of Appeals on electoral complaints can be appealed directly to the Supreme Court of Justice, which is the final instance of review. Complaints related to media coverage of elections can be filed with the Audiovisual Council. Decisions by the Council can be further appealed at the Chisinau Court of Appeals.

Generally, complaints during the electoral period should be filed within three days when the action was performed, inaction identified, or the decision taken. In line with international best practice, deadlines for considering complaints during the electoral period are short, within three days of the submission, but no later than election day. Election day complaints should be decided on the same day. However, since the campaign period coincides with the dispute resolution process for candidate registration, the legal framework does not provide a mechanism to ensure fair competition for all participants, falling short of meeting international standards (see also the Section on Candidate Registration). Courts should also follow the same deadlines when considering electoral complaints, including in appeal proceedings.

The CEC publishes the received complaints in their webpage.²⁴⁴ As per the online registry, prior to Election Day, the CEC received eleven complaints, ten related to the presidential elections and one regarding the referendum. Of the ten complaints related to the Presidential Election, the CEC rejected five as inadmissible, with only one

241 The CEC [Regulation on the examination procedure of appeals during the electoral period](#).

242 [Contravention Code of Republic of Moldova](#).

243 [Criminal Code of Republic of Moldova](#).

244 See the online Registry of the CEC with [complaints regarding the Presidential Elections](#) and [complaints regarding the Referendum](#).

dismissed due to non-compliance with the 3-day filing deadline.²⁴⁵ One complaint was referred to the DEC No. 38 ordering it to establish three PEBs in the Russian Federation, following the proposal from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²⁴⁶ In this case, the CEC partially satisfied the complaint; however the CEC decision was not implemented as the MFA did not comply with it. The CEC partially admitted the referendum-related complaint, addressing the misuse of electoral funds during the campaign.²⁴⁷

In the period between the two rounds of elections, the CEC registered nine complaints in its online register of complaints and appeals, six regarding the Constitutional Referendum and three regarding the Presidential Election. Most were forwarded to other authorities. The CEC discussed in public session and adjudicated on one complaint, filed by the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova, challenging the referendum results in the electoral district no. 38 (outside of the country), alleging a number of electoral irregularities.²⁴⁸ The CEC rejected the complaint as unfounded, a decision that was upheld by the Court of Appeals of Chisinau²⁴⁹ and the Supreme Court of Justice.²⁵⁰ The CEC generally adjudicated complaints with the legal deadlines. No public information was provided on the decisions of the authorities to which the CEC forwarded complaints deemed to be outside of its jurisdiction.

According to information received from the CEC, courts reviewed 37 contested decisions or inactions of the CEC. The Court of Appeals declared most of the cases inadmissible or rejected them as unfounded; partially satisfying one and fully satisfying three. In one case, the Supreme Court of Justice overturned the Court of Appeal's decision and ordered a retrial, citing a failure to examine all evidence thoroughly, potentially infringing the right to a fair trial. Most other appeals to the Supreme Court were declared inadmissible.²⁵¹

245 - CEC's [Decision no. CEC-7/16482](#) of September 20, 2024.

- The [decision of the Court of Appeal](#) in case no. 3-123/24, upholding the CEC Decision and rejecting the contestation.

- The [Decision of the Supreme Court of Justice](#) in case no. 3ra-831/24, regarding the inadmissibility of the appeal and upholding the Court of Appeal's decision.

246 [CEC's Decision no. CEC-10APr/5](#) of September 27, 2024.

247 [CEC's Decision no. CEC-10RR/1](#) of October 14, 2024.

248 [Decision no. 175](#) from October 24, 2024, regarding complaint no. CEC-10 RR/7, submitted on October 22, 2024, by the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova.

249 [Decision](#) by the Specialized Panel for Examining Administrative Litigation Actions of the Civil, Commercial, and Administrative Litigation Division, October 29, 2024, Chişinău (Case no. 3-153/24).

250 [Decision](#) on the inadmissibility of the appeal by the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova against the Central Electoral Commission regarding the annulment of an administrative act and the acceptance of a complaint, challenging the Chişinău Court of Appeal decision of October 29, 2024 (Case no. 3ra-883/24).

251 The SCJ declared inadmissible several cases, including "Partidul Nostru (PN) vs. Maia Sandu (PAS)," "Partidul Dezvoltării și Consolidării Moldovei (PDCM) vs. Maia Sandu (PAS)," and those involving political parties such as "RENAȘTERE," "ȘANSĂ," "VICTORIE," and "Forța de Alternativă și de Salvare a Moldovei." Additional inadmissible cases included filings by Ludmila Corsun, Valeriu Pleșca together with Iurie Cazacu and the European Social Democratic Party, Vasile Bolea (in two separate instances), the second case of Avelin Tabarcea, Gheorghe Guzun, the political party "ȘANSA," the "Socialist Party of the Republic of Moldova," and Renato UsaŃii (in two cases numbered 2947 and 2946).

ENEMO notes the high rate of dismissals or declarations of inadmissibility at the courts level due to procedural non-compliance. Common reasons for inadmissibility included missed filing deadlines, lack of legal standing (*locus standi*), and failure to fulfill formal requirements as stipulated by the Electoral Code and the Administrative Code.²⁵² The judiciary's emphasis on procedural correctness often resulted in dismissals without substantive examination of claims, reflecting a strict interpretation and application of legal requirements.

It should be noted that there are no standardized complaint forms at the EMB level and the courts, which could potentially mitigate the risk of complainants missing obligatory formal requirements and thus rejection of complaints on formal grounds. However, the CEC accepted complaints, despite minor deficiencies in formal requirements, if they met some basic prerequisites.²⁵³

To enhance the effectiveness and fairness of the electoral dispute resolution process, the judiciary should adopt a more balanced approach that considers both procedural compliance and the substantive merits of complaints. While adherence to legal requirements is essential, overly rigid interpretations that prioritize procedural correctness at the expense of addressing significant electoral grievances may undermine trust in the system.

All cases were reviewed in open sessions, allowing the parties involved to present their arguments, consistent with international standards. Judicial decisions were accompanied by detailed reasoning and case analysis. However, despite this procedural compliance, the substantive review of important campaign-related issues was often lacking. Most of the CEC's decisions to declare complaints inadmissible were upheld by the judiciary. Many EOM interlocutors expressed low trust in the election dispute resolution mechanism.

On 26 October and 1 November, candidate Alexandr Stoianoglo submitted two complaints to the CEC concerning the actions of candidate Maia Sandu.²⁵⁴ The CEC determined that both complaints fell outside its jurisdiction, although it had previously considered and granted a similar complaint from the ruling party. In response to the first complaint, the CEC forwarded the matter to the police, stating that defamation issues are governed by civil law, and informed the complainant of this decision via a formal letter.²⁵⁵ Stoianoglo challenged the CEC's inaction regarding the first complaint at the Chisinau Court of Appeals. However, on 2 November, the Court deemed the complaint

252 Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters ([CDL-AD\(2002\)023rev](#)), Guidelines on Elections, II. Conditions for implementing the criteria, 3. Procedural Guarantees, 3.3. An effective System of appeal, item b.: "The procedure must be simple and devoid of formalism, in particular concerning the admissibility of appeals."

253 E.g. elements that would identify the complainant, address where the response should be sent.

254 Stoianoglo claimed that PAS was distributing defamatory and misleading leaflets: see the [complaint](#) filed with the CEC on 26 October and the [complaint](#) filed on 1 November.

255 - [Letter no. CEC-8/6485](#) dated October 29, 2024.

- [Letter no. CEC-8/6486](#) dated October 29, 2024.

inadmissible due to a lack of legal standing.²⁵⁶ The second complaint, submitted on 1 November and addressing a similar issue, was handled in a comparable manner. The CEC responded to the complainant with a letter reiterating its earlier arguments and noted that the Court of Appeals had already dismissed the first complaint on similar grounds.²⁵⁷

The CEC's narrow interpretation of its jurisdiction and the subsequent restrictive view of legal standing by the Court of Appeals in these cases may have undermined the effectiveness of electoral justice. The complaints concerned the actions of an election contestant, which, under the Election Code, fall within the CEC's remit.²⁵⁸ These actions also had potential implications for the electoral campaign. Such interpretations risk limiting the CEC's ability to address matters that could impact the fairness of the electoral process.

The CEC should prioritize addressing complaints that have potential implications for the electoral campaign, even when they involve complex legal questions such as defamation. In cases where jurisdiction may overlap with other bodies, the CEC should ensure that substantive issues are addressed by the appropriate authority without undue delay.

The CEC received various communications throughout the election process that were not handled systematically, were not posted in the online register of complaints as they were not considered such, nor posted systematically in the relevant section of the website where incoming and outgoing correspondence is posted. In total, the CEC received some 100 such communications.

A unified register that includes both formal complaints and other communications that are not filed as formal complaints should be maintained and made accessible to the public in real time. The CEC should be provided with adequate resources to enable full transparency on complaints during the electoral period.

Although the CEC publishes decisions on complaints and appeals, it lacks an internal system for swift access to court data, relying instead on external sources for updates. This dependency leads to delays in receiving crucial information, highlighting the need for improvement, especially given the time-sensitive nature of elections. While accessibility is generally adequate, the system requires better integration and efficiency for faster and more transparent case handling.

256 See the [Decision of the Court of Appeals](#).

257 This was challenged at the Court of Appeals of Chisinau, which found it inadmissible due to legal standing, same as in the first case.

258 Article 91, paragraph 5 of the Election Code.

XII. ELECTION DAYS

On Election Days for both rounds, ENEMO EOM deployed multinational teams of short-term observers²⁵⁹ to follow the opening, voting, counting, transfer, and intake of election materials by DECAs.

Overall, both the first and second round Election Days were calm and well-managed, with positive assessments of the performance of PEBs and DECAs at most observed polling stations. While the voting process proceeded smoothly overall, some challenges were observed, such as overcrowding, missing voting booths for persons with disabilities, improper polling station setups, limited accessibility for persons with disabilities, and inadequate venues. There were also minor procedural issues, mainly inconsistent sealed mobile ballot boxes. Technical difficulties, such as malfunctioning cameras and occasional disruptions in the SAIS-E system, were promptly resolved without significant impact. Additionally, incidents of potential voter influence, including organized voter transportation and ballot photographing, were noted, particularly during the second round. Authorities responded effectively to the most serious disruptions, including coordinated cyberattacks on the national voter registration systems²⁶⁰ and bomb threats at polling stations abroad.

Counting procedures in both rounds were carried out properly at polling stations observed, with issues managed professionally. The delivery of materials was generally smooth, transparent, and in line with legal provisions. While overcrowding, long queues, fatigue, and cramped spaces occasionally affected efficiency, these instances did not significantly disrupt the overall process.

259 In the first round the mission deployed twelve teams of two observers each, of which nine teams were formed with the 18 short-term observers and three teams were the long-term observers of the EOM, to observe 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 DECAs. Observers monitored the opening procedures in twelve polling stations, voting in 160 polling stations, closing and counting in twelve polling stations and intake of election materials in twelve DECAs. In the second round, the mission deployed eight teams of two observers each, which monitored the opening procedures in eight polling stations, voting in 106 polling stations, closing and counting in eight polling stations and the intake of election materials in eight DECAs.

260 On Election Day, The Information Technology and Cyber Security Service (STISC) [reported](#) coordinated cyber-attacks originating from multiple countries, targeting the national voter registration systems and causing temporary connectivity disruptions between polling stations and central record systems, both in Moldova and abroad, impacting the infrastructure for viewing voter participation rates. On Election Day, The Information Technology and Cyber Security Service (STISC) reported coordinated cyber-attacks originating from multiple countries, targeting the national voter registration systems and causing temporary connectivity disruptions between polling stations and central record systems, both in Moldova and abroad, impacting the infrastructure for viewing voter participation rates.

OPENING PROCEDURES

ENEMO observed the opening procedures at 12 polling stations in the first round, and at 8 polling stations in the second round of elections.

Both rounds demonstrated a generally smooth, transparent, and professional management of opening procedures, with minor challenges related to accessibility, occasional procedural inconsistencies, and logistical barriers. The second round exhibited slight improvements in punctuality and procedural adherence but faced similar issues with PWD accessibility and logistical challenges. Observers consistently reported calm and orderly environments across both election days.

In both rounds, most observed polling stations opened on time at 7:00 AM, with preparatory procedures beginning promptly in most cases. In the first round, 50 percent of polling stations began preparations early, while in the second round, preparations were reported as slightly more punctual, with 75 percent of observed polling stations starting preparations at the designated time of 6:30 AM. Early starts observed in both rounds did not affect procedural compliance.

All essential materials were present in the observed polling stations for both rounds, with transparent procedures reported for sealing stationary ballot boxes. Mobile ballot box sealing was slightly less consistent, with minor deviations in each round. Cameras functioned properly in nearly all cases across both rounds.

Observers and authorized representatives were able to monitor opening procedures effectively in all observed polling stations during both rounds.

The second round noted the presence of an unauthorized person inside one polling station, while no such occurrences were reported in the first round. Police presence was visible but non-intrusive in both rounds.

Overcrowding was observed in one polling station during the first round, while no such issue was reported during the second round.

In both rounds, PEBs conducted the opening procedures in an orderly and professional manner at polling stations observed, adhering to prescribed protocols. A minor procedural issue with an unsealed mobile ballot box was reported in one polling station during the second round, whereas in the first round, no procedural violations were observed. Their performance was positively rated, with most assessed as "very good" or "good."

THE VOTING PROCESS

ENEMO observers assessed the voting process in 159 polling stations during the first round and in 106 polling stations during the second round of elections. Both rounds were generally well-organized and transparent, with positive evaluations from observers. Common challenges included accessibility for persons with disabilities, occasional overcrowding, and isolated procedural lapses. The second round saw additional issues, such as violations of voter secrecy and cyberattacks. Despite these differences, adherence to procedures and the consistent, orderly management by PEBs remained strengths throughout both rounds.

In the first round, the environment around polling stations was regular in most cases, with minor irregularities such as campaign materials at one polling station. In the second round, the environment was neutral, with no campaign materials observed, except for one incident involving the mayor of Singerei, who briefly entered a polling station wearing a hat with the insignia of a political party, but left promptly.

In the first round, 96.9 percent of polling stations observed had an acceptable setup and 99.4 percent of stationary ballot boxes properly sealed, though some issues with privacy and setup were noted.²⁶¹ In the second round, all polling stations observed had the required materials, but one lacked a voting booth for people with disabilities due to space constraints, and 2.8 percent of mobile ballot boxes were unsealed in the morning. Additionally, 99.1 percent of stationary ballot boxes were properly sealed, with one case of improper sealing observed. Essential materials for the conduct of voting were present in all observed polling stations in both rounds.

In the second round, 4.7 percent of polling stations observed (five PSs) had setup issues, including one case of non-compliance with procedural standards, causing voter confusion. Voting secrecy was compromised in some instances due to the placement of a PEB member, unfolded ballots, and an open space behind voting booths in one station, leading to visibility of voters' choices.

In the first round, 98.1 percent of polling stations observed had cameras recording properly, with issues reported in 1.9 percent of cases. In the second round, 94.3 percent of cameras functioned correctly, but six stations experienced malfunctions, including interruptions and the need for intervention to resume recording.

In both rounds, polling stations observed were staffed with the required number of PEB members, with women comprising the majority. In the first round, 89 percent of PEB members were women, while in the second round, women made up 85 percent of the members. Most polling stations had eleven members (60 percent), while others had nine (30 percent) or seven (10 percent) members.

In the first round, voter identification procedures were followed correctly at all observed

²⁶¹ Additionally, some polling stations were reported to be too cold, affecting the overall voting experience.

polling stations, with minor technical issues for SAIS-E operators in one station and voting secrecy slightly compromised at 1.3 percent of stations due to inadequate booth setups. In the second round, procedures were followed in 99.1 percent of polling stations, with one instance of an operator failing to check a voter's previous voting record. SAIS-E functioned smoothly in 91.5 percent of cases, with minor connectivity issues at 8.5 percent of stations due to cyber-attacks, though operations were restored within minutes.

In the first round, unauthorized persons were reported at only 0.4 percent of observed polling stations. In the second round, most polling stations also reported no unauthorized individuals, though 1.9 percent had instances, including a case where a mayor entered wearing promotional materials of a political party.

Accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs) remained a significant challenge in both rounds of elections. In the first round, 47.8 percent of polling stations were assessed as accessible, 32.1 percent required minor assistance, and 20.1 percent were not accessible, with common issues including the lack of ramps and multiple stairs, particularly in older buildings.²⁶²

Accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWDs) remained an issue in both rounds, with a significant proportion of polling stations requiring minor assistance or being unsuitable due to barriers like stairs or inadequate ramps (see also the Section on Persons with Disabilities).

National authorities and Election Management Bodies should ensure polling stations are fully accessible to PWDs through structural adjustments and PEB staff training on assisting PWDs.

In the first round, ENEMO observers were able to observe properly at approximately 98.7 percent of the visited polling stations, while in two polling stations (1.3 percent), the observation was difficult due to improper arrangement of the polling station, small premises of the precinct, or overcrowded polling stations. In the second round, at all 106 observed polling stations, STOs confirmed that all authorized observers were able to observe properly.

In the first round of elections, ENEMO STOs observed a few irregularities, primarily related to campaign materials at one polling station and organized voter transportation at two others. In contrast, the second round saw a higher number of irregularities. Although

²⁶² Many polling stations either lack ramps entirely or have ramps that are unsuitable for independent use. Even where ramps are present, additional assistance is often required, highlighting inadequate design or maintenance. Numerous polling stations are located on the second floor or require walking long or high stairs without alternative accessibility options. This design particularly hinders access for PWD and elderly voters, making voting independently impossible for many. Narrow hallways and tight spaces further restrict movement within polling stations, creating additional obstacles for wheelchair users and those with mobility challenges. Some polling stations lack voting booths specifically set up for PWD, limiting their ability to vote in privacy and comfort.

in 95.3 percent of polling stations observed the secrecy of the vote was respected, there were several incidents involving voters attempting to photograph their ballots, with three cases observed by ENEMO STOs,²⁶³ and four additional cases reported to them.²⁶⁴ In one case, the PEB chairperson allowed a voter who took a photo to delete it without involving the police, while another incident involved a confrontational voter. In a third case, police were called when a voter photographed their ballot. Additionally, a PEB member was observed tracking voter numbers and observing how voters marked ballots, potentially violating secrecy. Some polling stations had setups that compromised privacy, such as cameras or booth placements that captured voters' faces or ballots. Several voters were missing from the main voter list and added to the supplementary list,²⁶⁵ and inconsistent placement of photo-taking prohibition posters was noted. Some voters from Transnistria were reported to be unfamiliar with the voting process.

To ensure the protection of voting secrecy, procedural and setup issues should be addressed by properly positioning booths, preventing cameras from capturing ballots or voters, monitoring PEB members, candidates' representatives, and observers to avoid unauthorized tracking, and strictly enforcing rules against ballot photography.

The CEC in collaboration with relevant authorities should make further efforts to help familiarize voters, including those from Transnistria, with voting procedures. Emphasis should be placed on the secrecy of the vote and the prohibition of ballot photography.

In both rounds, most polling stations had no formal complaints, with only one minor complaint in the first round.

In both rounds, polling stations observed were generally well-managed, with the PEBs functioning smoothly in most cases. Although some polling stations were overcrowded, particularly in the second round due to high voter turnout,²⁶⁶ the PEB effectively managed the situation, ensuring orderly voting despite long lines and limited space in a few instances.

In the first round, 99.4 percent of polling stations observed were positively assessed, with only one (0.6 percent) rated poorly, due to negligence of PEB members. In the second round, 95.3 percent of polling stations were well-organized, despite some crowding issues in 4.7 percent of cases. PEB conduct was orderly and followed proper procedures, with 64.1 percent of evaluations rated "Very Good," 34 percent "Good," and 1.9 percent "Bad," due to negligence.

263 In PSs 29/2 and 29/54, Soroca.

264 In PSs No. 37/1, 37/29, 28/3, and 2/6. At polling station 37/29, the PEB chairperson reported two voters to the police for photographing their ballots. A report with photographic evidence was filed.

265 In PS No. 16/2, Edinet.

266 Especially in polling station 37/29 for voters residing in Transnistria, where over 200 people queued from the building entrance up to the second-floor polling area.

THE COUNTING PROCESS

ENEMO observers followed the closing and vote-counting procedures at twelve polling stations in the first round and eight polling stations in the second round of elections. All observed polling stations in both rounds closed in time, and no voter queues were reported at any of them at the moment of closing.

In both rounds, polling stations observed closed on time without voter queues, allowing immediate start of counting, with authorized individuals able to monitor the process. The counting process began without delay at all observed polling stations, with video cameras properly positioned and recording at nearly all stations, and procedures were followed correctly.

In the first round, unauthorized police officers were observed at one polling station during counting, attributed to negligence. In the second round, some procedural steps were performed simultaneously, but this did not affect the legitimacy of the process.

Election officials should be trained to strictly enforce access rules to prevent unauthorized persons from being present during the vote-counting process.

In both rounds, no formal complaints were filed at the polling stations observed during the counting process. The minutes were completed in full compliance with legal requirements, and copies were provided to all authorized individuals and posted at the polling stations as required. Election materials were packed and sealed in full compliance with legal regulations, with no reported irregularities.

PEBs received positive evaluations by ENEMO observers, with all observed polling stations in the first round rated as “very good” or “good,” and in the second round, 75 percent of observers rating the PEBs as “very good” for their efficiency, professionalism, and well-coordinated counting process.

Overall, the observed procedures adhered to established guidelines, and the counting process proceeded smoothly without any significant issues. The presence of both domestic and international observers, as well as candidates’ representatives, was also noted.

TRANSFER OF MATERIALS TO DECS AND DEC ACTIVITY

ENEMO observers monitored the transfer of election materials and respective intake at twelve DECs in the first round and at eight DECs in the second round of elections. In both rounds, 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 the first round, 75 percent of observed DECs were assessed as spacious and adequate for material delivery, while 25 percent were considered too small. Most DECs allowed proper observation, though one had issues with setup, and overcrowding was noted

in 25 percent of cases. In the second round, 87.5 percent of observations found DEC premises sufficient, though one team reported overcrowding leading to delays. Half of the observations noted overcrowding,²⁶⁷ with some DECs²⁶⁸ experiencing significant congestion and delays, complicating movement and observation.

In the first round, the delivery and intake of election materials at DECs was generally smooth and transparent, though overcrowding, tension caused by extended queues and tiredness, and limited space affected efficiency in some cases. In the second round, the process remained transparent and straightforward, with DECs accessible to observers, though one observer noted that overcrowding hindered effective monitoring.

DECs should be adequately equipped and spacious, with proper space planning, staffing, and training to prevent overcrowding, delays, and ensure efficient management of election materials and personnel.

In the second round, minor irregularities were observed, requesting the correction of PEB minutes in one case.

In both rounds, no formal complaints were registered regarding DEC activities.

In the first round, DECs were positively evaluated by ENEMO observers in eleven out of twelve observed DECs, with one assessed as bad due to negligence, and all DECs were rated as transparent and straightforward. In the second round, 62.5 percent of observers rated the DECs as "Very Good" and 37.5 percent as "Good," with a consensus on transparency and orderly procedures despite some logistical challenges.

267 In the DECs No. 2, Balti, No. 16, Edinet and No. 29, Soroca.

268 The DECs No. 16, Edinet and No. 29, Soroca.

XIII. OBSERVERS

The electoral law guarantees non-partisan observation of the election process by both domestic and international observers. Election contestants and candidates can nominate representatives or proxies.

Domestic observers can be accredited by non-governmental organizations focused on human rights or democratic values, as outlined in their statutes or internal acts. They can be accredited by the Central Election Commission (CEC) or District Electoral Councils (DECs) upon request, provided they meet certain accreditation requirements. Domestic observers accredited by the CEC can monitor the electoral process throughout the country and in all polling stations, while those accredited by DECs can only observe within the respective Electoral District.

Organizations seeking accreditation as observers must file their requests up to seven days before election day. The relevant EMB must decide within five days for domestic observers and within ten days for international observers, but no later than election day. Decisions to deny registration or accreditation must be justified and can be challenged at the Chisinau Court of Appeals in the case of the CEC and at the CEC in the case of DECs. Before the first round of Elections, the CEC rejected the accreditation of 782 observers from three domestic organizations and one public institution.²⁶⁹ While the CEC decisions were upheld by the Courts,²⁷⁰ the justifications provided lacked sufficient detail, leaving the basis for assessing impartiality unclear. ENEMO deems that disqualifying observer groups without concrete evidence of actions that directly threaten electoral integrity risks being disproportionate. Restricting these groups based on prior partisan activities or alleged affiliations may infringe on their rights to association and expression unless clear proof exists that their involvement would undermine the fairness of the election.

The Regulation on the status of observers and the procedure for their accreditation should be amended to provide comprehensive and transparent criteria for granting and revoking observer accreditation.

269 The CEC rejected the accreditation of 115 observers from the [“INIMI GRIJULII”](#) public association and of 660 from the organization [“SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI”](#) public association, justifying its decisions by stating that the activities of these associations were incompatible with the role of entities conducting election observation missions. It was determined that the associations in question were engaged in active political activities and had connections with international organizations deemed to pose a threat to national security. The CEC accredited seven observers and rejected four from the [“ADOR ORAȘUL MEU”](#) public association because they were involved in active political actions on social media, including expressing their referendum preferences, and one was suspected of attempting to falsify voting results, which conflicted with the impartiality required of election observers. The CEC also accredited six observers and excluded three from [Public Institution “Centre for continuous training in the electoral field” \(CICDE\)](#) because they were electoral officials, a status incompatible with that of an observer under the Electoral Code.

270 On 20.10.2024, Chisinau Court of Appeal [rejected](#) as unfounded the request of the organization „SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI” regarding the annulment of CEC decision no. 3126 of 18.10.2024. Subsequently, on 25.10.2024, the Supreme Court of Justice [ruled](#) as inadmissible the appeal of the organization „SUFLETUL ȘI INIMA MOLDOVEI” against the decision of 20.10.2024 of the Chisinau Court of Appeal.

Between the two rounds, the CEC declined to accredit two national observers due to an ongoing investigation into allegations that they accepted money to vote a certain way in the first round.

Before the first round, the CEC accredited five domestic observer organizations with 1,277 accredited observers. Among the accredited organizations, Promo-Lex (with 1,167 observers), a member of ENEMO, conducted extensive observation at various levels. Following the announcement of the second round, the CEC opened a new accreditation period until 27 October, additionally accrediting 269 national observers.²⁷¹

International observers were accredited solely by the CEC and could only observe upon invitation from the CEC.²⁷² They had the same rights as domestic observers, except for the right to file complaints on irregularities, which is consistent with international practice. Before the first round, the CEC accredited 24 embassies, 14 election administrations of foreign states, and 17 international organizations, totaling 784 accredited observers. The CEC did not provide accreditation as international short-term observers for eight persons.²⁷³ Observers' accreditations from the first round of elections remained valid for the second round. Following the announcement of the second round, the CEC additionally accredited 94 international observers.²⁷⁴ The CEC revoked the accreditation of two international observers,²⁷⁵ after a recommendation from the Security and Intelligence Service.²⁷⁶ ENEMO observers did not face any restrictions or issues in performing their observations, nor were there reported cases of similar restrictions by domestic observers.

271 Promo-LEX accredited 13 observers, while "MIRAD" public association accredited 256 observers.

272 As per Article 88(4) of the Electoral Code and Point 7 of the [Regulation](#) on the status of observers and the procedure for their accreditation, the application for accreditation of international observers can be submitted only if the entity has received an invitation from the CEC, ex officio or upon request, to monitor the elections. According to the CEC, invitations to observe the 20 October 2024 elections were issued ex officio before the start of the electoral period to accredited embassies, international organizations with which Moldova has formally established and ratified treaties, and foreign organizations with which the CEC has established or ongoing collaborations. The CEC refused to issue invitations to several foreign-registered public organizations for various reasons, including late or incomplete document submissions, insufficient evidence of the organizations' experience in election observation, absence of explicit provisions in their statutes permitting them to conduct election observation missions, etc.

273 Of these, six were nominated by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, one by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, as well as one from the International Organization of Francophonie.

274 Of the total number, 81 international observers were accredited by ODIHR.

275 CEC [decision](#) No. 3165 of 30.10.2024

276 According to point 15 of the [Regulation](#) on the status of observers and the procedure for their accreditation, approved by CEC [Decision](#) No. 1195/2023, the Central Electoral Commission collaborates with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Security and Intelligence Service, and the Public Services Agency in assessing the admissibility of invitation requests and accreditation applications, including decisions to refuse or revoke observer accreditation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Authorities should take stronger actions to counter malign interference, including by increasing vigilance over illegal vote-buying schemes, foreign financing, and other forms of external influence, ensuring robust legal responses to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and the stability of the country's institutions.

The capacities of the authorities to combat shadow and illicit financing of election campaigns should be strengthened, by increasing resources, improving training, and bolstering the capabilities of relevant institutions. Efforts should prioritize enhancing transparency in campaign financing, with a particular focus on identifying and preventing illicit funding from foreign sources and illegal groups.

To uphold the principle of stability of the electoral law, amendments to the legal framework close to an election should be avoided to the extent possible, and only limited to amendments addressing urgent legal gaps or improving inclusivity. Any necessary changes should follow inclusive and transparent consultations and allow sufficient time for implementation.

Legal provisions to regulate third-party campaigning must be introduced, ensuring transparency and accountability in electoral processes and preventing unregistered entities from influencing elections without oversight.

To maintain a level playing field, legal provisions should be introduced to clearly separate the campaigns for elections and referendums, preventing any undue advantage for contestants participating in both processes simultaneously. Additionally, explicit requirements should be established mandating public authorities to maintain strict neutrality during referendum campaigns.

Cybersecurity measures must be reinforced, to ensure that the Central Election Commission website remains operational during critical periods, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to data such as voter turnout and preliminary results, thereby bolstering public confidence in the electoral process.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Parliament

Deadlines for signature submission and verification, including time for potential complaints resolution, should be scheduled well before the official start of the campaign, to allow all candidates sufficient time to complete the necessary procedures and begin campaigning on an equal footing.

To ensure coherence between the deadlines for results tabulation, dispute resolution, and the second-round election campaign, the Electoral Code should be amended to provide a more realistic and harmonized timeline. Consideration could be given to extending the interval between the two rounds.

The legal framework should be amended to ensure that no citizen is deprived of the right to vote based on mental disability, aligning national legislation with international standards and obligations to uphold the principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination in the electoral process.

Independent citizen groups and civil society organizations should be allowed to register as referendum contestants alongside political parties, promoting inclusivity and broader public participation.

The residency requirement for presidential candidates should be removed or otherwise reduced, to align with international standards. The requirement for higher education for presidential candidates should be removed, as it creates an unreasonable barrier to candidacy and contradicts international standards.

Measures should be introduced to minimize changes in PEB membership, particularly between election rounds, to ensure stability and operational efficiency.

The right to vote for voters reaching 18 years of age between two rounds of an election should specifically be regulated in the law.

To the Election Management Bodies

To improve transparency and streamline result verification, it is advisable for the CEC to publish election results in machine-readable format, ensuring greater accessibility for stakeholders and the public.

To promote consistent transparency and effective information sharing, the CEC could reinstate the positive practice of distributing draft decisions to observers, media, and stakeholders prior to sessions. Furthermore, the CEC should prioritize the timely publication of meeting minutes, ideally within a few days, to uphold the integrity of the decision-making process and promote accountability.

The procedure for verifying language proficiency for presidential candidates should be clearly regulated, transparent, and based on objective, measurable criteria.

PEBs should maintain announced operating hours to ensure consistent access for citizens to obtain information, request corrections, and apply for absentee voting or mobile ballot boxes.

Consideration could be given to the CEC providing additional support and resources to smaller parties and independent candidates to help them meet enhanced financial reporting requirements. This could include offering guidance, simplified reporting processes, or access to professional assistance, ensuring that all contestants, regardless of their size or resources, can comply with regulations without undue burden. The CEC must be properly staffed and supported to ensure that it can efficiently oversee campaign finance.

A unified register that includes both formal complaints and other communications that are not filed as formal complaints should be maintained and made accessible to the public in real time. The CEC should be provided with adequate resources to enable full transparency on complaints during the electoral period.

The CEC should adhere strictly to the legal provisions and timelines when processing referendum contestant applications, ensuring all decisions, including the registration of political parties, are made within the established deadlines.

The DEC's should work with local councils and political parties to ensure timely submission of PEB nominations, and explore measures to streamline the nomination process, so as to avoid delays.

The Central Electoral Commission and the Audiovisual Council should ensure that the organization of debates adheres strictly to the legal framework, with a clear role for public service broadcasters in facilitating impartial and inclusive debates.

Consideration could be given to electoral authorities working with financial institutions and the National Bank of Moldova to ensure a smooth and transparent process for candidates to open bank accounts. The banks should promptly inform the National Bank regarding the non-opening of the account for a contestant, which should be the case only when justified. Any unexplained rejections or delays in account openings should be investigated to avoid unfair obstacles for candidates.

Formal procedures and regulatory frameworks should be established for inter-agency cooperation in detecting and investigating illegal campaign financing.

The CEC should prioritize addressing complaints that have potential implications for the electoral campaign, even when they involve complex legal questions such as defamation. In cases where jurisdiction may overlap with other bodies, the CEC should ensure that substantive issues are addressed by the appropriate authority without undue delay.

To ensure the protection of voting secrecy, procedural and setup issues should be addressed by properly positioning booths, preventing cameras from capturing ballots or voters, monitoring PEB members, candidates' representatives, and observers to avoid unauthorized tracking, and strictly enforcing rules against ballot photography.

The CEC in collaboration with relevant authorities should make further efforts to help familiarize voters, including those from Transnistria, with voting procedures. Emphasis should be placed on the secrecy of the vote and the prohibition of ballot photography.

Election officials should be trained to strictly enforce access rules to prevent unauthorized persons from being present during the vote-counting process.

DECs should be adequately equipped and spacious, with proper space planning, staffing, and training to prevent overcrowding, delays, and ensure efficient management of election materials and personnel.

The Regulation on the status of observers and the procedure for their accreditation should be amended to provide comprehensive and transparent criteria for granting and revoking observer accreditation.

The CEC should ensure strict adherence to the Electoral Code by maintaining an odd number of members in the DECs.

To further enhance efficiency and professionalism of the election administration, consideration could be given to organizing follow-up training or refresher courses for election commissioners between the two rounds, focusing on addressing any shortcomings observed in the first round.

To the Government and other state authorities

The Government and state bodies must ensure a clear separation between official duties and campaign activities during the election period. To ensure a fair and level playing field during elections, high public officials should limit their participation in campaigning events.

To ensure a level playing field, the Government and state bodies should avoid activities related to referendum topics during the campaign. In the absence of legal obligations for neutrality, they are encouraged to adopt practices aligned with international standards to promote fairness and impartiality.

Allegations of misuse of administrative resources should be thoroughly investigated to maintain fairness and prevent any undue advantage for ruling parties or candidates.

To maintain public trust and uphold electoral integrity, the executive should enhance transparency in the decision-making processes related to the staffing of polling stations abroad, ensuring that all decisions are clearly communicated and justified.

National authorities should improve the mechanisms for updating the State Voter Register (SVR), particularly for deceased citizens, by introducing proactive measures to cross-check data with other state registries and addressing gaps related to deaths abroad and in Transnistria.

Authorities should take proactive measures to ensure strict adherence to the 2016 Constitutional Court ruling, which prohibits religious cults from participating in electoral campaigns. The legal framework should be reinforced to effectively prevent the influence of religious institutions in elections or political life of the country.

Consideration could be given to simplifying reporting requirements and regulations for small local audiovisual media outlets, to reduce undue burdens. Additionally, efforts should be made to support these outlets through capacity-building initiatives, including training and resources, to encourage their active participation in covering elections.

ENEMO strongly recommends that all public authorities take proactive measures to ensure that public buildings commonly used as polling stations are fully accessible to individuals with disabilities and special physical needs, in line with human rights standards.

National authorities and Election Management Bodies should ensure polling stations are fully accessible to PWDs through structural adjustments and PEB staff training on assisting PWDs.

To political parties and candidates

Political parties and candidates should adopt and enforce clear codes of conduct prohibiting hate speech and discriminatory remarks during campaigns. Electoral authorities and relevant institutions should monitor and address such behavior promptly.

Political candidates and parties should refrain from using discriminatory language or perpetuating harmful stereotypes about sexual minorities in their campaigns. Additionally, authorities should promote and properly enforce regulations that prevent hate speech and encourage respect for diversity, fostering a more inclusive and tolerant electoral environment.

To ensure voters are well-informed, it is crucial for politicians to actively participate in debates organized by audiovisual media outlets and adhere to the proposed debate formats. Given the large number of such media platforms, candidates should prioritize engaging in at least a selection of these debates to provide voters with meaningful opportunities to assess their programs, policies, and qualifications.

Political parties must actively promote gender equality in political discourse, including by condemning and addressing sexist remarks targeting women in leadership positions. Additionally, public awareness campaigns could be developed to challenge

and dismantle patriarchal stereotypes about women in politics and leadership, while fostering a more inclusive and respectful political environment.

To other stakeholders

To enhance the effectiveness and fairness of the electoral dispute resolution process, the judiciary should adopt a more balanced approach that considers both procedural compliance and the substantive merits of complaints. While adherence to legal requirements is essential, overly rigid interpretations that prioritize procedural correctness at the expense of addressing significant electoral grievances may undermine trust in the system.

Media outlets and journalists should adhere to journalistic ethics and ensure balanced and impartial election coverage, providing citizens with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding the elections and referendum.

Social media platforms must strengthen their monitoring mechanisms to detect and remove disinformation and any unauthorized political content in real time during election periods in all countries. Social media companies should collaborate more closely with local authorities and independent observers to ensure that any disinformation campaigns or illegal electoral interference are swiftly identified and removed.

Social media platforms should improve transparency by requiring clear labeling of political advertisements and implementing stricter controls on paid content from unregistered third parties.

In case of future referendums held concurrently with a general election, media outlets should take proactive steps to extensively cover the referendum, facilitating public discussions and providing comprehensive information to ensure voters are well-informed.

ENEMO urges the audiovisual service providers to update their technical capacities to ensure that voters with impaired hearing can receive all information to make an informed decision.

ABOUT ENEMO

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. 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 IEOMs 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 250,000 observers.

To date, ENEMO has organized 41 international election observation missions to 11 countries: Hungary 2024, Municipal Elections; Moldova 2023, Local Elections; Serbia 2022, Presidential and Early Parliamentary Elections; Hungary 2022, Parliamentary Elections; Kosovo 2021, Local Elections; Georgia 2021, Local Elections; Moldova 2021, Parliamentary Elections; 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; 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.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

#	ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME
1	A.T.U. Gagauzia	Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia
2	AMS	Audiovisual Media Services
3	AMSC	Audiovisual Media Services Code
4	AVC	Audiovisual Council
5	CCA	Chisinau Court of Appeal
6	CEC	Central Electoral Commission
7	CEDAW	UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
8	CICDE	Centre for Continuous Electoral Training
9	CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
10	CSO	Civil Society Organization
11	DEC	District Electoral Council
12	E-Day	Election Day
13	EC	Electoral Code
14	EMB	Election Management Body
15	ENEMO	European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations
16	EOM	Election Observation Mission
17	GRECO	Group of States Against Corruption
18	ICCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
19	LFE	Law on Freedom of Expression
20	LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer
21	LPA	Local Public Authority
22	LTO	Long-Term Observer
23	PACE	Political Party "We Build Europe at Home"
24	PAS	Party of Action and Solidarity
25	PEB	Precinct Electoral Bureau
26	PS	Polling Station
27	PSA	Public Services Agency
28	PSRM	Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova
29	PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
30	SAIS-E	State Automated Information System "Elections"
31	SCJ	Supreme Court of Justice
32	SRP	State Register of Population
33	SRV	State Register of Voters

#	ABBREVIATION	FULL NAME
34	STISC	Information Technology and Cyber Security Service
35	STO	Short-Term Observer
36	VL	Voters List

ANNEX 1. Election results

Presidential Election

First Round²⁷⁷

Number of voters registered in the main voter lists	2,710,856
Number of voters included in the supplementary lists	312,650
Number of voters who received ballots	1,564,758
Number of votes	1,564,495
Difference between the number of ballots received by voters and the number of votes	263
Total number of votes abroad ²⁷⁸	240,720
Number of votes by mail ²⁷⁹	1,282
Number of votes from Transnistria ²⁸⁰	16,133
Number of invalid ballots	18,464
Total number of valid votes cast:	1,546,031

NUMBER OF VALID VOTES CAST FOR EACH CANDIDATE:		
CANDIDATE	NUMBER OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Alexandr STOIANOGLO (Political Party „Party of the Socialists of the Republic of Moldova”)	401,215	25.95
Maia SANDU (Political Party „Party of Action and Solidarity”)	656,852	42.49
Renato USATÎI (Political Party „Our Party”)	213,169	13.79
Vasile TARLEV (Political Party „Party for the Future of Moldova”)	49,316	3.19
Irina VLAH (Independent Candidate)	83,193	5.38
Ion CHICU (Political Party „Party for the Development and Consolidation of Moldova”)	31,797	2.06
Andrei NĂSTASE (Independent Candidate)	9,946	0.64
Octavian ȚÎCU (Electoral Bloc „Together”)	14,326	0.93

277 According to CEC [decision](#) No. 3130 of 23.10.2024

278 According to CEC [report](#) on the results of the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova of October 20, 2024, approved by the CEC [decision](#) No. 3209 of 9.11.2024.

279 Ibid

280 Ibid

NUMBER OF VALID VOTES CAST FOR EACH CANDIDATE:		
CANDIDATE	NUMBER OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Victoria FURTUNĂ (Independent Candidate)	68,778	4.44
Tudor ULIANOVSCHI (Independent Candidate)	7,995	0.52
Natalia MORARI (Independent Candidate)	9,444	0.61

Second Round²⁸¹

Number of voters registered in the main voter lists	2,709,867
Number of voters included in the supplementary lists	423,820
Number of voters who received ballots	1,701,333
Number of votes	1,701,284
Difference between the number of ballots received by voters and the number of votes	49
Total number of votes abroad ²⁸²	329,916
Number of votes by mail ²⁸³	1,322
Number of votes from Transnistria ²⁸⁴	26,288
Number of invalid ballots	20,715
Total number of valid votes cast:	1,680,569

NUMBER OF VALID VOTES CAST FOR EACH CANDIDATE:		
CANDIDATE	NUMBER OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE
Maia SANDU (Political Party „Party of Action and Solidarity”)	930,139	55.35
Alexandr STOIANOGLO (Political Party „Party of the Socialists of the Republic of Moldova”)	750,430	44.65
Natalia MORARI (Independent Candidate)	9,444	0.61

281 According to CEC [decision](#) No. 3208 of 9.11.2024.

282 According to CEC [report](#) on the results of the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova of October 20, 2024, approved by the CEC [decision](#) No. 3209 of 9.11.2024.

283 Ibid

284 Ibid

Constitutional Referendum²⁸⁵

Number of voters registered in the main voter lists	2,711,615
Number of voters included in the supplementary lists	309,199
Number of voters who received ballots	1,532,264
Number of votes	1,531,392
Difference between the number of ballots received by voters and the number of votes	872
Final voter turnout	50.72%
Total number of votes abroad ²⁸⁶	237,632
Number of votes by mail ²⁸⁷	1,275
Number of votes from Transnistria ²⁸⁸	15,805
Number of invalid ballots	42,518
Total number of valid votes cast:	1,488,874

EXPRESSED OPTION:		
OPTION:	NUMBER OF VOTES	PERCENTAGE
YES	749,719	50.35
NO	739,155	49.65

285 According to CEC [decision](#) No. 3146 of 25.10.2024.

286 According to CEC [report](#) on the results of the elections for the position of President of the Republic of Moldova of October 20, 2024, approved by the CEC [decision](#) No. 3209 of 9.11.2024.

287 Ibid

288 Ibid

ANNEX 2. ENEMO Observers**Short-term observers**

NAME AND SURNAME	COUNTRY	ENEMO MEMBER ORGANIZATION
Luka Brailo	Croatia	GONG
Margarita Harutyunyan	Armenia	TIAC
Gazmend Agaj	Albania	SDC
Nikolina Stepanovic	Montenegro	CeMI
Akylbek Esengulov	Kyrgyz Republic	CDCS
Borislav Pavloski	North Macedonia	MOST
Iryna Lysiuk	Ukraine	CVU
Aleksandar Velan	Croatia	GONG
Dimitrije Mihajlovic	Serbia	CeSID
Tatevik Ghazaryan	Armenia	TIAC
Cholpon Babaly	Kyrgyz Republic	CDCS
Dusan Tomic	Montenegro	CeMI
Marija Sretenovic	Serbia	CeSID
Ihar Maslouski	Belarus	BHC
Bruna Marinovic	Croatia	GONG
Erjon Lushi	Albania	KRIK
Ilija Miranovic	Montenegro	CeMI
Orion Hazati	Albania	KRIK
Dmytri Chernyh	Belarus	BHC
Peter Novotny	Slovakia	OBCIANSKE OKO
Antonio Kacani	Albania	SDC
Atyr Abdrahmatova	Kyrgyz Republic	CDCS
Antuela Male	Albania	KRIK
Zarija Vujosevic	Montenegro	CeMI
Sanja Pavic	Croatia	GONG
Radojko Savic	Serbia	CeSID
Levon Chukaklyan	Armenia	TIAC

Long-term observers

NAME AND SURNAME	COUNTRY	ENEMO MEMBER ORGANIZATION
Rigers Bena	Albania	SDC
Halyna Bakhmatova	Ukraine	CVU
Bosko Milovic	Montenegro	CDT
Asem Murzailova	Kyrgyz Republic	CDCS
Sanja Sekulic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	/
Edmond Prifti	Albania	KRIK

Core Team

NAME AND SURNAME	POSITION	COUNTRY	ENEMO MEMBER ORGANIZATION
Dritan Taulla	Head of Mission	Albania	KRIK
Elidon Lamani	Election Analyst / CEC Observer	Albania	KRIK
Mariam Chubabria	Political and Campaign Analyst	Georgia	ISFED
Momcilo Radulovic	Political and Campaign Analyst	Montenegro	CeMI
Ivana Vujovic	Data Analyst	Montenegro	CeMI
Dunja Pejic	LTO/STO Coordinator	Croatia	GONG
Dubravka Tomic	Financial and Logistics Officer	Montenegro	CeMI

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