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**STATEMENT OF
THE EUROPEAN NETWORK OF ELECTION MONITORING ORGANIZATIONS
ON THE CANCELLATION OF ITS OBSERVATION MISSION
TO THE JULY 29, 2009 EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

Translated from the Russian language version.

The ENEMO international observation mission to the early Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova officially announced the Mission's refusal to monitor the elections. The Mission states that the conditions that were set by the authorities of the country make it impossible to perform a comprehensive monitoring effort. In addition to overt interference from the authorities, the observers from ENEMO were threatened by unknown persons of a criminal appearance. In this situation the Mission could not guarantee the safety of its observers, including those who were accredited, and was forced to bring its work to an end.

As a result of its efforts ENEMO concludes:

- **Entities at the highest levels of Moldovan authority (the Ministry of Interior, the Central Election Commission, the immigration police) exceeded their authority, and violated national legislation, as well as international norms and standards for democratic elections.**
- **The authorities of the Republic of Moldova purposefully created conditions to discredit the electoral process and undermine public confidence in the voting results.**
- **In addition to hampering the work of international observers, the Moldovan Central Election Commission refused to accredit observers from other national organizations without grounds.**
- **The initial observation effort of ENEMO demonstrated that the Republic of Moldova has serious problems in conducting elections according to national and international laws.**
- **Despite all the efforts of the authorities to create a negative image of international observers, Moldovan public opinion supported the international efforts to monitor the electoral process. Moldovan society seeks fairness and transparency of electoral processes.**

On July 22, the Central Election Commission of Moldova decided to invite an international election observation mission from ENEMO (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations). One hundred and forty activists from non-governmental organizations in 12 countries agreed to participate in the observation mission. Within a tight timeframe, the Mission to Moldova was able to fully comply with all deadlines stipulated by national law on submitting accreditation documents.

However, the Central Election Commission superficially and without justification or explanation refused to accredit most of the ENEMO observers. Only 53 out of 140 observers received official status as international observers. The Head of the Mission, Sergei Tkachenko, was denied accreditation.

The Central Election Commission provided its written decision on accreditation of ENEMO international observers only on July 28, 2009. (Note: This decision responded to the ENEMO appeal and repeated the previous CEC verbal denial of accreditation).

There is no official justification regarding denial of accreditation in the decision. ENEMO believes that the refusal of accreditation of its observers is contrived, and it discriminates against the Mission overall and against ENEMO member-states in particular.

As most of the observers had already arrived in Moldova when the Central Election Commission presented its decision, the leadership of the Mission filed an appeal to the CEC requesting accreditation of all observers. In the evening of July 27, the CEC upheld its decision on the matter. Eighty-seven observers of the ENEMO Mission remained unaccredited.

Essentially, throughout the short-term observers' stay in Moldova (from July 26 – 28, 2009), the authorities made unprecedented attempts to discredit the international observers. The leadership of the Central Election Commission and other authorities tried to create an inaccurate image of the ENEMO Mission in the Moldovan society and attribute various characteristics to our observers which do not correspond to reality (saying they were persons with criminal records, participated in organizing mass disturbances). The Mission is comprised of heads of the leading civic organizations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union countries and the destructive position of the Moldovan authorities is completely groundless, since they always carry out their work at a high professional level, in accordance with national and international standards.

The next unfriendly step taken by the Moldovan authorities against the participants of ENEMO was denying entry to the territory of Moldova to 11 observers from Georgia. On July 27, at the Chisinau airport the border police detained the members of the Georgian delegation. After being held on the airport premises for nearly 24 hours, the observers were sent back to Georgia. Concerning this, the Georgian authorities released a note of protest.

After ENEMO observers were denied accreditation for the second time, the participants of the Mission began having problems with immigration police. In the evening of June 27 about 30 representatives of immigration police arrived at the hotel complex where most of the representatives of the Mission were located. After an inspection of documents, Head of Mission Sergei Tkachenko and long-term observer Edil Baisalov were detained and taken to an unknown location.

As it later became clear, Sergei Tkachenko was held at the main office of the immigration police, where he was repeatedly encouraged to sign a commitment to leave the territory of Moldova within 24 hours. The ENEMO Head of Mission refused to do so as he saw no reasons for this. Around 2:00 a.m. Sergey Tkachenko was released.

The status of Edil Baisalov remained unknown to his family and the leadership of the Mission for more than 12 hours. It became known only the next day that Baisalov was deported from Moldova without being given the possibility to collect his personal belongings.

At 6:00 a.m. on July 28, the immigration police of Moldova forced their entrance into hotels in the cities of Balti and Soroca and detained ENEMO observers. Later, in private conversations, the law enforcement officers said they had received the order to “get them out of bed” at midnight.

However, these officers persuaded their leadership to wait until the morning and to watch the room doors.

For several hours, observers were under psychological pressure to sign a commitment to depart the country within 24 hours. It was noted that the immigration police had lists of observers provided to the Central Electoral Commission. The main reason for detention of observers was the absence of accreditation from the Central Election Commission, rather than any violation of the passport regime. However, ENEMO observers refused to sign the commitment to leave the country.

In the town of Soroca, five observers from Ukraine were taken to court for entering the country illegally according to an official opinion of Moldova. The Ukrainian observers indeed entered the country through the territory of Transnistria. However, as the consul of Ukraine to Moldova explained, this manner of entering Moldova does not contradict international agreements. For several hours the Ukrainian observers were kept in poor conditions and were under psychological and moral pressure. After several hours the court ruled to apply a fine and expel the Ukrainian citizens. The observers were deported without an opportunity to exercise their right of appeal, and in violation of the procedures of deportation.

Despite being met with systematic harassment by the authorities, the ENEMO Mission expresses its gratitude to the people of Moldova for the hospitality and genuine good will displayed to international observers. We believe that Moldova can expect positive changes on its way to fully providing for the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

Note

The ENEMO Mission (European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations) intended to carry out the observation of the early Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova on July 29, 2009.

On July 22, 2009 the leadership of ENEMO received an invitation from the Central Election Commission to monitor the electoral and voting processes of the early parliamentary elections. In its invitation letter, the Central Election Commission expressed hope for a fruitful collaboration and relationship between our two organizations. The Mission planned to include six long-term observers and about 100 short-term observers from 12 countries of CIS, Central and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Russia, Belorussia, Montenegro, Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, and Macedonia).

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