



Election Day observation in the Republic of Moldova, 29th July 2009

The Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO) deployed an election observation mission to the repeated parliamentary elections in July 2009, which followed the discussed April 2009 elections. ACEEEO's observer, Mr. Attila Kaszás, Program Director at ACEEEO Secretariat, observed the elections with officials of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Lithuania.

The elections in general were well organised thanks to the efforts of the Central Election Commission; the atmosphere was peaceful aside from a gun-shooting and injury in a polling station. Below are some concrete technical observations on different aspects of the elections.

Voter information

The Central Election Commission's voter information campaign was visible throughout the capital of Chisinau, the billboards and posters were displayed in both official languages, in Romanian and Russian. Probably the information campaign contributed to the relatively high voter turnout, as the election took place first time on a workday during the history of Moldovan democracy.

Voter registration

Many problems related to the voter registration were reported before and during the elections. Voter registration is a joint responsibility of local authorities and regional offices of the Ministry of Information Development, and it isn't properly managed due to insufficient financing, unclear division of competences and responsibilities and lack of sanctions. The provisional voter lists managed by the local election commissions offered a far too easy opportunity for the voters and the election administration to correct the inaccuracies of the voter lists, and a far too high share of the voters used this option.

Election monitoring

The elections were very severely monitored by Moldovan political parties, by Moldovan NGOs and international organisations. Although political parties were represented in the local election commissions, additional party representatives were seating in the polling stations to observe and control their own party

colleagues. This lack of mutual trust shows deficiencies in the society and causes unnecessary use of social resources.

Not all members of the ENEMO organisation's observation mission were granted entry to the Republic of Moldova, therefore the whole mission failed.

Secrecy of the voting

In general the necessary measures were taken to protect the secrecy of the elections. A particular phenomenon was observable in several polling stations. The polling booths were covered by a translucent curtain, and inside the booth a reading-lamp was lighting, so any bystander could see the vote of the citizens. This technical particularity slightly compromised the secrecy of the voting.

Efficiency of ballot counting

The counting of the ballots has a particular system in the Republic of Moldova. The chairman of the local election commission opens every ballot, shows them to the members of the commission, reads the vote loudly and gives it to another member of the commission. Although this method seems to be very transparent, it is also very inefficient. The first counting of over eight-hundred ballots takes over two and a half hours, and practically makes it impossible to know the first election results on the night of the Election Day. Probably the same social mistrust is the ground of this method as of the enormous number of observers.