



GUIDELINE FOR OBSERVERS

**FOR THE GENERAL LOCAL ELECTIONS
of 5 November 2023**

Chisinau • 2023

Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova

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Educational material, distributed by the Central Electoral Commission, as part of the information campaign for the General Local Elections of November 5, 2023. Edition of 300 copies, paid according to the contract no. 40/2023 of 06.09.2023

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WHO ACT AS AN OBSERVER?

Observers are persons with the right to vote, representing domestic, foreign or international organisations or institutions, whose mission is to observe the organisation and conduct of elections.

To be entitled to monitor the elections, the person must be **accredited by the electoral bodies as an observer** in line with the provisions of *Article 88 of the Electoral Code No. 325/2022 and the Regulation on the status of observers and their accreditation procedure*.

Observers can be:

- *national* – citizens of the Republic of Moldova with the right to vote accredited by electoral bodies in the manner established by the Electoral Code, at the request of NGOs and training and research institutions in the electoral field from the Republic of Moldova, whose mission is to observe the organization and conduct of elections;
- *international* – citizens of the Republic of Moldova with the right to vote, as well as foreign citizens representing foreign electoral authorities and training and research institutions in the electoral field, international organizations, governments of foreign states and foreign non-governmental organizations, as well as international electoral experts accredited by the Central Electoral Commission under the terms of the Electoral Code, whose mission is to observe the organization and conduct of elections.

NOTE!

- A domestic or foreign non-governmental organisation shall be considered qualified and may apply for accreditation of observers if its charter or other internal documents provide for the conduct of election observation missions and/or conduct of activities in the field of defending human rights or democratic values, promoting participatory democracy and/or the interests of certain categories of citizens. The non-governmental organisation must have a permanent governing body, authorised representatives and mechanisms for communicating with them.
- The application for accreditation of international observers can be submitted if the entity has received an invitation to monitor elections. The invitation may be made by the *Central Election Commission*, on its own initiative or at the request of the concerned entity, or through the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration*, at the request of the Commission.

WHO AND UNDER WHICH CONDITIONS CAN ACCREDIT OBSERVERS?

Bodies responsible for the accreditation of observers:

- Central Electoral Commission accredits:
 - international observers (for whom it registers interpreters/translators, upon request);
 - national observers from NGOs.
- District Electoral Council accredits, upon request:
 - national observers from qualified NGOs from the Republic of Moldova.

Documents required for accreditation

The following documents must be submitted for the accreditation of observers and/or the registration of interpreters:

- **For national observers:**
 - official request for accreditation of observers from the institution/organisation;
 - the list of persons proposed for accreditation, filled according to the **Annex 1** to the *Regulation on the status of observers and their accreditation procedure*;
 - NGOs shall submit copies of the extract from the State Register of Legal Entities, **issued no later than 6 months** prior to the date of submission of request, as well as a copy of the charter;
 - training and research institutions in the field of elections from the Republic of Moldova shall submit a copy of the registration document to the competent state body;
 - a copy of the valid identity document (identity card, temporary identity card with the mentions concerning the citizenship of the Republic of Moldova).
- **For international observers:**
 - official letter requesting accreditation of observers and/or registration of interpreters from the institution/organisation;
 - NGOs shall submit a copy of their charter and a copy of their registration certificate with the competent body or its equivalent;
 - foreign electoral training and research institutions shall submit a copy of the registration certificate from the competent state body;

- the application form for the accreditation of the international observer filled according to the template from **Annex 2** to the *Regulation on the status of observers and their accreditation procedure*. **The form shall be filled by each candidate;**
- for foreign citizens - copy of the valid passport of a foreign citizen (travel document);
- for citizens of the Republic of Moldova - a copy of the valid identity document (identity card, temporary identity card with the mentions concerning the citizenship of the Republic of Moldova).

Applications for accreditation of national observers shall be examined **no later than 5 days** after the submission of the complete set of documents and in case of international observers – **no later than 10 days**, but no later than the day before the Elections Day. The electoral body shall adopt a decision on: accrediting all persons from the list; accrediting only a part of the persons from the list; or rejecting the request for accreditation.

If the submitted candidates are being rejected, the electoral body is obliged to inform the entity that nominated the candidates of the reason for their rejection.

NOTE!

- Observers can be accredited until the start of the electoral period. The request for accreditation must be submitted no later than 7 days before the Elections Day (28.10.2023).
- A person can be an observer on behalf of a single authorised entity.
- The status of observer is incompatible with the position of:
 - ✓ candidate for an elective office;
 - ✓ treasurer of the political party, electoral competitor;
 - ✓ journalist;
 - ✓ election official;
 - ✓ representative or trustworthy person of the electoral competitor;
 - ✓ head or member of the initiative group;
 - ✓ head (responsible positions) of the religious cult or servant within it;
 - ✓ person holding public dignity position or civil servant who has not suspended his/her employment relationship once confirmed as an observer;
 - ✓ authorised interview operator for exit polls.

Withdrawal of the observer's accreditation or its replacement by another person may be requested by the entity that previously requested the accreditation of this person, by written request, submitted to the appropriate electoral authority.

WHERE CAN OBSERVERS PERFORM THEIR ACTIVITY AND DURING WHICH PERIOD?

Where can observers conduct their activities?

Observers accredited by the **Central Electoral Commission** can monitor the electoral process throughout the country, in all districts and at all polling stations. Observers accredited by the **District Electoral Council** can monitor the electoral process only on the territory of the respective district.

Period of activity

The observer duties shall begin on the date of entry into force of the accreditation decision and shall end on the day immediately following the day on which the final election results are irrevocably confirmed by the competent bodies.

If the legality of the elections is refuted and a repeated elections are being held, accreditation shall be maintained and, if new elections are being called after the repeated voting, accreditation shall be reconfirmed at the request of the applicant, without the need to submit any additional documents.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF AN OBSERVER

Observers have the RIGHT:

- ✓ to assist, without being involved in the process, in all electoral operations, including all meetings of the electoral bodies, in the checking, sealing and opening of ballot boxes, in the counting, tabulation of votes and centralisation of voting results, in the process of checking documents for the registration of candidates, initiative groups, in the preparation, printing and sending of ballot papers and certificates with the right to vote, in the drawing up of all minutes on voting results;
- ✓ in the process of checking the signatures collecting lists, based on a written application to the electoral body;
- ✓ to take note of the voters' lists;
- ✓ to inform the chair of the electoral body of irregularities observed in the elections process;
- ✓ to have access to all electoral information;
- ✓ to obtain copies of the decisions, minutes of the electoral body;
- ✓ to be present, without being involved in the process, at the meetings of electoral competitors;
- ✓ after notifying the chair of the electoral body, to make video and audio recordings, take photos of the electoral process, without endangering the secrecy and security of the vote or the protection of personal data;
- ✓ to inform the public about their findings;
- ✓ to take other actions which do not contravene the legislation in force.

National observers may lodge notifications about observed violations, which shall be examined by the electoral body, with compulsory information of the notification author about the taken decision. The submission and resolution of complaints are carried out both in written form and through the "Observers" Module from the State Automated Information System "Elections". Besides observers, access to the "**Observers**" Module during the electoral period is granted to electoral bodies of all levels.

International observers may, if necessary, be accompanied by interpreters, who will not interfere in the electoral process or other actions of the electoral bodies.

Observers are OBLIGED:

- ✓ to be impartial and not express their personal opinions or preferences regarding specific candidates or issues arising during elections;
- ✓ on Elections Day not to present findings that would favour or disfavour certain electoral candidates;
- ✓ not interfere in the elections process, Elections Day proceedings or vote counting;
- ✓ to wear IDs issued by the electoral body and, at the request of all concerned persons, to identify themselves and confirm that the person accompanying them is an interpreter, both of them must show their identity card;
- ✓ not to wear symbols belonging to electoral competitors;
- ✓ not to give instructions or take actions contrary to the decisions of the electoral bodies;
- ✓ not to make campaigning for or against electoral competitors;
- ✓ to know and comply with the legislation of the Republic of Moldova;
- ✓ to ensure, in line with Law No. 133/2011 on Personal Data Protection, the confidentiality and compliance of the processing of personal data to which they have access and not to use/process the data for other purposes than those for which they have been given access, and not to reveal the data they have become acquainted with during their activity or even after they have ceased to be observers.

OBSERVERS' LIABILITY

The observer shall be legally liable under the legislation in force.

In the event of a breach by the observer of the electoral legal framework, the electoral body which accredited the observer shall be entitled to impose one of the following sanctions, by adopting a decision to that effect, taking into account the seriousness of the violation:

- warning;
- cancellation of accreditation.

ATTENTION!

Cancellation of the observer's accreditation shall have the effect of depriving the person concerned of the right to be accredited in that capacity during the same electoral period.

The following shall be considered as a violation:

- ✓ any electoral campaigning for or against a political party, electoral competitor or candidate, initiative group;
- ✓ attempting to influence voter choice;
- ✓ failing in any way to comply with the observer's rights and obligations;
- ✓ disclosing personal data they have become acquainted with during the electoral process.

The Decision on the application of the sanction may be appealed in line with the provisions of Chapter XIII of the Electoral Code No 325/2022.

For non-compliance with the provisions concerning the personal data protection, the observer is liable according to the law. In the event of liability, it shall be applied by the competent bodies, to the extent of the actions/inactions committed by the observer.

Serious violations of electoral legislation are punishable by criminal law. Shall be considered criminal offences **hindering** by any means of the free exercise of the electoral right or hindering the work of electoral bodies: **committed** by blocking or attacking the premises of polling stations by any means and in any form; **committed** by stealing ballot boxes or electoral documents; **committed** by endangering the life of the person; **accompanied** by serious injury to body or health; **resulting** in other serious consequences. There are also penalties for offering or giving money, goods, services or other benefits to determine the voter to exercise or not to exercise his/her electoral rights in elections.

ELECTORAL LEGISLATION

There are a number of national and international acts regulating the electoral process in the Republic of Moldova.

At international level, the most important document whose provisions are binding for all UN member states is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.

At the national level, there is the **Constitution of the Republic of Moldova**, which is the supreme law in the state, and the **Electoral Code**, which is the normative act regulating the way elections are being organised and conducted. At the same time, the Central Electoral Commission approves **regulations** and **instructions** that are binding for all citizens and electoral subjects.

Therefore, in their work, persons accredited as observers shall carry out their activity under the conditions of the legislation of the Republic of Moldova and shall be guided by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the Electoral Code, the Regulation on the status of observers and their accreditation procedure, other normative instruments in the field, as well as international treaties to which the Republic of Moldova is party.

The hierarchy of sources of law for the electoral process is schematically represented as follows: *Constitution of the Republic of Moldova* → *Electoral Code* → *Regulations* → *Instructions* → *Decisions*.

Where the provisions of the lower regulatory instrument contradicts with the provisions of the higher-level normative acts, the provisions of the higher-level normative acts shall be applied.

Likewise, if these provisions contradicts with the provisions of another normative act of the same level, the provisions of the act adopted at a later date shall be applied.

ATTENTION!

The duties of observers, electoral bodies and other electoral subjects are set forth in the above listed acts and must be fulfilled in strict compliance. Arbitrary interpretations are not allowed!

INTERACTION OF OBSERVERS WITH OTHER ELECTORAL STAKEHOLDERS

In line with Article 80 (8) of the Electoral Code, are entitled to attend all meetings of the electoral bodies, as well as the counting and tabulation of votes, the operations related to the voters' lists, ballot papers and other electoral documents, the drawing up of minutes on the results of voting: members and representatives of the higher electoral bodies; representatives of the electoral competitors; accredited national and international observers and their interpreters; journalists accredited by the media institutions and subsequently confirmed by the CEC.

ATTENTION!

No person other than those mentioned above may remain in the polling station for longer period than is necessary to exercise their right to vote.

In addition to the above-mentioned stakeholders, in the election monitoring process, observers may also interact with: voters; electoral competitors; trustworthy persons of electoral competitors or representatives of other institutions (persons representing central or local government authorities, police, etc.)

MONITORING THE ACTIVITY OF ELECTORAL BODIES

In the monitoring process, observers are in permanent cooperation with representatives of electoral bodies.

Electoral bodies:

Central Electoral Commission (CEC) – an independent and apolitical public authority established to carry out electoral policy. The mission of the Central Electoral Commission is to create optimal conditions for the unhindered exercise by the citizens of the Republic of Moldova of their constitutional right to elect and be elected in free and fair elections, including by ensuring compliance with the legislation on the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns. The Central Electoral Commission is a collegial body and is currently composed of 9 members, all with permanent status: one member is appointed by the President of the Republic of Moldova, the other 8 members - by the Parliament, respecting the proportional representation of the majority and the opposition. The Central Electoral Commission is assisted by an apparatus.

The Centre for Continuous Electoral Training (CICDE) is a public institution founded by the Central Electoral Commission, which carries out training, education, research and information activities in the electoral field. The Centre trains and certifies election officials and other persons interested and/or involved in the electoral process.

District Electoral Councils of the second level (DEC II) are electoral bodies that are permanently active, with the exception of District Electoral Councils established for polling stations outside the country and for localities on the left bank of the Dniester. They are set up by the Central Election Commission and consist of an odd number of members of at least 7 and no more than 11 persons.

The Chair of the DEC II acts on permanent basis. The other members of DEC II, except for the Chair, are appointed at least 55 days before Elections Day as follows: two members from the court in whose territorial district the electoral council is located; two members from the second level local council in whose territorial district the electoral council is located; one member from each political party represented in Parliament.

District Electoral Councils of the first level (DEC I) manages elections at the level of locality. They are established by the DEC II, from an odd number of members, of not less than 7 and not more than 11 persons, at least 40 days before Elections Day, as follows: two members from the first-level local

council in whose territorial area the electoral council is located; one member from each political party represented in Parliament. If, after the presentation of candidates by all the subjects with this right, the number of candidates is not sufficient or the composition of the District Electoral Council represents an even number, the remaining seats are filled by the CEC.

Precinct Electoral Bureaus (PEB) shall be established by the DEC II at least 25 days prior to Elections Day, from an odd number of members, of at least 5 and no more than 11. The Bureaus manage the electoral process at polling station level. Three members are appointed by the local councils and one member is appointed by each political party represented in Parliament. If, after the submission of candidates by all eligible entities, the number of candidates is not sufficient or the composition of the Precinct Electoral Bureau is an even number, the remaining seats are filled by the District Electoral Council, on the proposal of the CEC, from among the persons included in the Register of Electoral Officials.

NOTE!

- ✓ For the position of DEC member of any level and PEB, shall be nominated persons who have attended training courses at the CICDE and hold the appropriate qualification certificates valid on the date of their confirmation. Candidates for DEC II nominated by Courts and local councils must have higher education in law or public administration.
- ✓ The details of the organisation and functioning of the District Election Council are stipulated in Article 35 of the Electoral Code and in the Regulation on their activity.
- ✓ The details of the organisation and functioning of the polling station electoral board are stipulated in Article 38 of the Electoral Code and in the Regulation on their activity.
- ✓ Within each electoral council and electoral bureau, a few persons are permanently active, who are either detached or convened, the other members only attend the meetings of these electoral bodies. During Elections Day, all members are being involved in the work of the electoral body to which they belong.

Organisation of meetings of electoral bodies

Meetings of electoral bodies are public, and electoral bodies are obliged to inform the public of the date, time and subjects to be discussed.

During the electoral period, **meetings of the Central Election Commission** are held according to the deadlines set out in the calendar programme of electoral actions.

At least 24 hours before the beginning of the ordinary meeting or at least 12 hours before the beginning of the extraordinary meeting, the draft agenda shall be published on the official website of the Central Election Commission www.cec.md, under the heading "CEC Meetings", sub-heading "Agenda".

Meetings of electoral bodies may be convened by the Chair or by at least 1/3 of the total number of members. They are deliberative if more than 1/2 of their members participate.

NOTE!

Observers attending the meeting must identify themselves and register on the **attendance sheet**, which is attached to the minutes of the meeting.

Decisions of electoral bodies shall be adopted by open vote by a majority of their members and shall be signed by the Chair and, in his absence, by the Secretary of the electoral authority. In the absence of the Chair and the Secretary of the CEC, adopted decisions shall be signed by the Deputy Chair of the Commission and, in his/her absence, by the Chair of the meeting.

In the absence of the Chair and the Secretary of the lower electoral bodies, decisions shall be signed by the Chair of the meeting, who shall be elected at the beginning of the meeting.

Members of the electoral body who do not agree with the decisions adopted shall have the right to express their opinion in written form within 24 hours of the adoption of the decision, which shall be attached to the minutes of the meeting.

ATTENTION!

The decisions of electoral bodies, adopted within the limits of their competence, are binding for public authorities, enterprises, institutions and organisations, regardless of their legal form of organisation, officials, political parties and all citizens.

Decisions adopted by lower electoral bodies shall be communicated to the public as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after their adoption, by posting them at the electoral body's headquarters and by other means of information.

CEC decisions shall be published on the Commission's official website within 24 hours of their adoption and decisions of individual character shall also be published in the Official Gazette.

Observers may receive a copy of the adopted decision upon request.

For a good collaboration, observers:

- shall discuss politely and appropriately with the representatives of the electoral bodies, asking only questions related to the organisation and conduct of the elections, within the limits of the competences of the respective body;
- shall request from the representatives of the electoral authorities only documents/information within their competence, in line with the legal provisions;
- shall NOT make comments and shall NOT express personal opinions regarding their political preferences, the actions of the electoral bodies (shall NOT speculate on any election-related issues), shall NOT spread rumours etc.

MONITORING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO VOTERS' LISTS

Legal basis: *Art. 61, 62 and 78 of the Electoral Code and the Regulation on compilation, management, dissemination and update of voters' lists.*

Basic voters' lists are made available at polling stations. Observers have the right to check whether the data on voters are correct, to submit requests for the correction of errors made during the entry of data on other voters, no later than 7 days before Elections Day, with the attachment of confirmatory documents. Requests are being examined within 24 hours by the notified electoral body. Decisions on the submitted requests may be appealed by the interested parties in Court.

In relation to the Voters' Lists, the electoral bodies are guided by the principle of transparency, but, ATTENTION, within the limits allowed by *Law No 133/2011 on personal data protection*.

**ATTENTION!**

It is forbidden to make photos or copy the Voters' List or the information on it.

A voter may be registered only on one Voters' Lists and at only one polling station.

Electoral Code provides three types of Voters' Lists: *basic, supplementary and for voting at the place of stay*.

Particular features of Voters' Lists for General Local Elections:

- **Basic Voters' Lists** – is drawn up by the CEC based on data from the State Register of Voters. It includes all citizens with the right to vote who have their domicile or temporary residence within the territorial radius of a polling station.

ATTENTION!

Voters who do not have registration for domicile or temporary residence in the respective administrative-territorial unit do not participate in the election of the local council and mayor.

The term of registration of domicile or temporary residence may not be **less than 3 months** before the date of the first round of elections.

- **Supplementary Voters' Lists** – is drawn up by the Precinct Electoral Bureau. The following categories of voters are being entered:
 - voters who, for certain reasons, have been omitted from the basic list;
 - persons detained under an arrest order and persons sentenced to prison, located in the same administrative-territorial unit as their domicile/residence;
 - voters who on the day of voting are in sanatoriums, resorts, hospices, hospitals and other stationary curative institutions, only if they have their domicile or temporary residence in the administrative-territorial unit in which these institutions are located;
 - election officials, at the polling station where they work, if they have their domicile/temporary residence in the administrative-territorial unit where the polling station is located;
 - students and pupils with the right to vote enrolled in educational institutions in the locality in which they have domicile or temporary residence registration for less than 3 months before the date of the first round of elections, being obliged to present their identity card with the accompanying card and the student/pupil card containing information on the educational institution in which they are enrolled.
- **Voters' Lists for voting at the place of stay** – is drawn up by the Precinct Electoral Bureau and signed by the Chair of the bureau. It includes voters who, for health or other well-grounded reasons, cannot travel to the polling station. The note "voted at the place of stay" will be written in the Basic Voters' List in the line of the respective voter.

No later than 20 days before Elections Day, the Basic Voters' Lists shall be made available at polling stations, ensuring that voters, representatives of electoral competitors and observers have the opportunity to get acquainted with them and to verify the correctness of their preparation.

MONITORING OPERATIONS RELATED TO BALLOT PAPERS

Observers have the right to be present, without being involved in the process, at the preparation, printing, counting and sending the ballot papers.

Observers shall have the right to get acquainted with ballot paper models at the concerned polling station.

NOTE!

Observers will be informed in advance by the Central Electoral Commission on the date, time and place of these operations.

The printed ballot papers are sent to the Precinct Electoral Bureaus through the District Electoral Council under police guard. The ballot papers shall be sent to the District Electoral Councils by the Central Electoral Commission no later than 2 days before Elections Day and shall be delivered to the Precinct Electoral Bureaus the day before Elections Day.



The printed ballot papers shall be stored at the District Electoral Council and are handed over to the Precinct Electoral Bureau on the day before the Elections Day based on a delivery-reception act.

NOTE!

The ballot papers will be transported in a vehicle rented by the electoral body, accompanied by the escort of the territorial police bodies' collaborators, to ensure security during the journey.

Members of electoral bodies will **NOT** provide transport/lodging for observers or other persons entitled to observe the process.

MONITORING ACTIVITIES ON ELECTIONS DAY

All the activities conducted by the electoral bodies during the electoral period have one aim – to ensure that voting day takes place according to schedule, without incidents, in compliance with the law and international electoral standards.

For these reasons, the presence of observers at the polling stations on this particular day is very important.

Opening of the polling station

On Elections Day, between 06.30 and 07.00, the Chair of the Precinct Electoral Bureau, together with the nominated operator, sets up and activates the video camera that will record the electoral operations. In the presence of at least half of the members of the polling station, the Chairperson checks the ballot boxes, booths, the existence of Voters' Lists, ballot papers and stamps and draws up two copies of the minutes on the preparation of the polling station opening. After, he/she places one copy of the minutes in the stationary ballot box and closes and seals the ballot boxes with self-locking seals. The minutes shall be signed by all the members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau present and after one copy has been placed in the ballot box, the Chair of the bureau shall declare the beginning of voting. If there is more than one stationary ballot box, the minutes shall be inserted only in one of them.

Observers can also come at this time. The Chair and the Secretary of the Electoral bureau are responsible for communicating with observers.

During the Elections Day, observers monitor all processes, including can report any irregularities, suspected fraud and complete a report. When they arrive at the polling station, observers shall present their accreditation badge and original identity card to the Secretary of the Bureau.

The Precinct Electoral Bureau shall bear full responsibility for the organisation of voting, for the secrecy of the voters' vote, the layout of the polling station premises so as to ensure appropriate conditions for exercising the right to vote, including for persons with disabilities.

Time and place of voting

Voting takes place on Elections Day between 07.00 and 21.00.

The responsibility for ensuring the order on Elections Day in the polling station premises and within a radius of 100 metres around the polling station is borne by the PEB Chairperson together with the law enforcement forces. Decisions taken for this purpose are binding for everyone. Failure to comply with the orders of the PEB Chair shall entail contravention liability.

During the time reserved for voting, it is forbidden to close the polling station and to suspend voting, except for cases of mass disorder, natural disasters, other unforeseen circumstances that put voters in danger or make it impossible to vote. In such cases, the PEB Chair may suspend voting for up to two hours, during which he/she shall restore the polling station premises to their proper condition or to find another location, notifying the voters about this.

Persons entitled to assist at the voting process shall not be required to leave the polling station premises during the suspension of voting.

Rules for observers

The polling station must be set up in such a way to provide observers with stationing areas and conditions to monitor all electoral operations without creating difficulties in their conduct.

Observers are **PROHIBITED** from:

- moving around the premises of polling station in an unmotivated/unorganised manner;

NOTE!

During Elections Day, observers will be able to move around the polling station **ONLY** if they notice irregularities or to ask for clarification, ask questions of the PEB members.

- standing in close proximity to PEB members, especially those responsible for issuing ballot papers;
- compromising the confidentiality of voters' personal data;
- communicating with voters or helping them to vote.

At the request of the observers, the Chairperson shall record their comments and objections on the voting procedure in an act to be attached to the minutes of the Precinct Electoral Bureau.

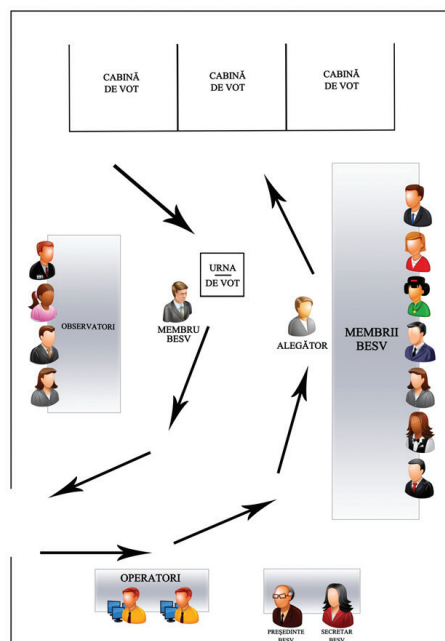
ATTENTION!

Observers may take photos and videos **ONLY** with the notification of the Chair of the electoral body, without endangering the secrecy and security of the vote or the personal data protection.

How to vote correctly?

The polling station premises shall be set up in such a way as to ensure the fair and transparent conduct of the electoral process and to guarantee the secrecy of the vote.

1. The voter enters the polling station and shows the operator his/her identity card.
2. The operator enters the voter's identification data into the system, and the system checks whether the voter meets the legal requirements for exercising the right to vote, whether the voter is specifically assigned to the polling station where he/she has been present, and whether the voter has voted at another polling station during this election.
3. The voter shall receive the ballot papers from the member of the Precinct Electoral Bureau, according to the Voters' List, only on presentation of his/her identity card.
4. On receiving the ballot paper, the voter shall sign the Voters' Lists in line with his/her name.
5. The ballots are filled in by the voter **only in the booth**, by applying the stamp "Voted".
6. The voter votes applies the stamp "Voted" inside of one circle of the ballot paper, which means that he/she has voted for that respective competitor.
7. The voter folds the ballot paper and **MUST** insert it in the ballot box.

**NOTE!**

If the voter has filled in the ballot paper incorrectly, the Precinct Electoral Bureau shall, at the voter's request, cancel the ballot paper and immediately issue, only once, a new ballot paper. This case shall be recorded in the minutes on the vote counting and the appropriate entry shall be made in the Voters' Lists under the heading "Note".

ATTENTION!

A voter may vote **ONLY** once and **ONLY** at one polling station.

Voting for special categories of voters

Voting at the place of stay – If, for health or other grounded reasons, a voter is unable to come to the polling station in whose territorial area he/she has domicile or temporary residence, he/she may request to vote at the place of stay. Voters included on the Basic Voters' Lists shall vote on the basis of the Voters' List for voting at the place of stay and the words "Voted at the place of stay" shall be written near their names.

Voting for persons with disabilities – A voter who, for health or other grounded reasons, is unable to fill in the ballot paper alone shall, at his/her request, be provided with support equipment and/or be assisted in the voting booth by an attendant of his/her choice. The accompanying person may not be a member of the Precinct Electoral Bureaus, accredited persons or candidates. These cases shall be recorded separately in the report of the Precinct Electoral Bureau.

NOTE!

Observers may accompany the mobile ballot box. Members of the electoral bodies will **NOT** provide transport/car seats for observers or other persons entitled to observe the process.

Closing of the polling station

After the end of the time reserved for voting, the PEB Chair shall declare the voting closed and order the closure of the polling station. The Precinct Electoral Bureau starts counting of the votes.

Voters waiting outside the polling station at 21:00 will be invited inside to exercise their right to vote.

The mobile ballot box team will return to the polling station by 21.00.

Immediately after returning to the polling station, the team members shall transmit to the operators of the State Automated Information System "Elections" the basic Voters' List for voting at the place of stay and/or the supplementary Voters' List for voting at the place of stay, to record in the system the fact that the persons who have voted based on these lists have participated in voting.

NOTE!

The polling station decides on the extension of the voting program at most with 2 hours, to allow voters standing in line at the polling station in question to exercise their rights, informing the district electoral council and the Central Electoral Commission of the extension.

Counting the votes and tabulation of the voting results

As soon as the polling station closes, the members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau remain in meeting and participate in the electoral operations of counting the votes, drawing up the minutes and the electoral bureau report. In the event of physical incapacity or for other extraordinary reasons, the member of the Precinct Electoral Bureau may leave the polling station premises and this fact shall be recorded in the report of the Precinct Electoral Bureau.

In addition, only the persons authorized to assist the operations related to the ballots and voting results' tabulation may remain in the premises, including observers.

ATTENTION!

ONLY members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau are entitled to count the ballots and tabulate the voting results.

Only after the Precinct Electoral Bureau has completed the counting and tabulation of the voting results and the packing of all documents and materials, the polling station premises will be opened.

During the above-mentioned procedures, no person shall enter or leave the polling station premises.

When counting the votes, the members of the Bureau will be guided by the *principle of transparency*, which will ensure confidence in the results of the vote. Therefore, the entire vote counting process must be assisted by observers.

In the process of counting and tabulating the votes, the members of the polling station will follow the **described procedure**:

1. The place for counting the votes shall be set up.

2. Before the ballot boxes are being opened, all the stamps marked "Voted" shall be collected, counted and transmitted to the PEB Chair.
3. Unused ballot papers and those returned by voters shall be counted and cancelled by punching them.
4. The number of voters to whom ballot papers have been issued shall be established.
5. The integrity of the seals applied on the ballot boxes shall be checked.
6. The number of ballot papers from the mobile ballot box shall be counted, compared with the number of ballot papers that have been issued for this purpose, and then added to the other ballot papers.
7. The number of ballot papers from the stationary ballot box shall be counted. The number of voters who voted shall be ascertained by determining the number of ballot papers drawn from the stationary and mobile ballot boxes and compared with the number of voters who received ballot papers.
8. Invalid ballots shall not be included in the total number of valid votes.

NOTE!

In the process of counting the votes, the PEB Chair or the member nominated by him/her shall take a ballot paper from the table, lift it so that those assisting in counting of the votes can see it and shows the front and the back. Another member/other members shall place each ballot paper, showed according to the described procedure, on the table, in front of the desk badge of the electoral competitor for whom the vote was cast.

If the ballot paper is found to be invalid, the PEB Chair of the polling station shall give all members of the polling station and persons authorised to be present at the election the opportunity to examine the ballot paper to be declared invalid.

If the members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau have doubts on validity of the ballot paper, the issue shall be solved by open vote and the result of the vote shall be recorded in the minutes of the electoral bureau meeting.

To avoid any errors, the results of the vote count will be checked repeatedly.

After the counting of the votes has been completed, the polling station shall draw up the minutes of the results of the vote count in line with *Articles 81-83 of the Electoral Code*.

Three copies of the minutes on the results of the vote counting shall be drawn up in the presence of the members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau, representatives of the electoral competitors and other persons authorised to be present at the electoral operations. Immediately after it has been signed by

all the members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau, the operator shall enter the data from the minutes on the results of the votes counting into the State Automated Information System "Elections" under the supervision of the Chair of the bureau. One copy of the minutes shall be kept at the Precinct Electoral Bureau and another copy shall be submitted to the District Electoral Council.

ATTENTION!

A copy of the minutes on the results of the votes counting, confirmed by the chair of the polling station by signature and stamped, shall be handed to the observers and persons authorised to attend the electoral operations.

A copy shall be displayed immediately at the entrance to the polling station.

Packing and transmission of electoral materials

Observers have the possibility to monitor all actions related to the packing, sealing, transmission and centralisation of electoral documents and materials.

Once the ballot counting has been completed, all election materials and documentation will be packed and sealed.

In the case of General Local Elections, the Chair of the **Precinct Electoral Bureau** shall transmit to the **first level District Electoral Council**, as soon as possible, but no later than **18 hours** after the closing of the polling stations, the electoral documents and materials in line with the provisions of the instruction adopted by the CEC. The transportation of the sealed election documents, accompanied by police, shall be done out by the Chair and at least two members of the Precinct Electoral Bureau.

The first level District Electoral Council shall submit the election materials and documentation to **the second level District Electoral Council** as soon as possible, but no later than **24 hours** after the closing of polling stations. **The second level District Election Council** shall submit the election materials and documentation to the **Central Election Commission** within 48 hours after the closing of polling stations.

Once the minutes on the tabulation of elections results for the district have been sent to the above-mentioned institutions, the District Electoral Council shall display at the entrance to its premises the detailed information on the elections results for the district.

ANNEX

CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Address: 119 Vasile Alecsandri Street, Chisinau, MD-2012

Members of the CEC	
CARAMAN Angelica , Chairperson	(022) 251-451
POSTICA Pavel , Deputy Chair	(022) 251-455
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