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NDI Concludes Pre-Election Assessment Mission and Presents Recommendations Ahead of Moldova's 2024 Presidential Elections and Referendum on European Integration

Chisinau, Moldova - The National Democratic Institute (NDI) deployed its Pre-Election Assessment Mission (PEAM) to Moldova from September 2 to 6, 2024 in advance of the presidential election and a constitutional referendum on European integration to be held on October 20, 2024. The delegation presented its findings and recommendations today.

With just over six weeks until voting, the NDI delegation found that preparations are well underway, and are administered in a professional and transparent manner by the Central Election Commission (CEC) based on a new Electoral Code that provides a sound legal basis for the presidential election and constitutional referendum.

“The greatest threat to electoral integrity is foreign malign influence from Russia, including foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), which predominantly involves propagating false information on social media platforms, as well as related illicit financing” stated NDI delegation leader Pekka Haavisto, Member of the Finnish Parliament and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland. At the same time, the NDI delegation cautioned that efforts to combat foreign malign influences from Russia must not undermine the principles of credible elections, including a free and open exchange of ideas.

While not fundamentally undermining the credibility of the presidential election or constitutional referendum, the NDI delegation noted that various stakeholders raised legitimate issues about specific electoral processes.

“There are still important and practical steps that can be taken to further improve the integrity of the presidential election and the constitutional referendum,” said NDI Regional Director for Eurasia, Eva Busza. “NDI’s delegation provides an accurate and impartial assessment of the electoral environment, legal framework and preparations for elections and demonstrates the international community’s commitment to credible elections in Moldova.”

The statement provides several practical recommendations, including seven priority actions:

1. The government, in collaboration and coordination with the CEC, needs to lead on informing the public about threats to the electoral process and efforts to protect the integrity of the elections.

2. Government agencies and the CEC should ensure that efforts to combat false information do not unintentionally impinge upon the rights of Moldovans to contest the presidential elections; to advocate for or against constitutional referendum; or to make informed choices.
3. Social media platforms should dedicate greater resources to Moldova to identify false information and patterns of inauthentic behavior, including allocating more resources for analyzing Romanian and Russian content, and proactively ensure that they are not accepting advertisements from sanctioned individuals or their proxies.
4. Presidential candidates and political parties should reject illegal foreign funding and fully comply with all campaign finance regulations in a timely manner.
5. All stakeholders, including the government, should communicate about issues related to the constitutional referendum in a way that does not undermine the rights of women and minority groups.
6. The relevant authorities should increase their efforts to protect CEC officials and staff, candidates and party activists, members of civil society, in particular citizen observers, and journalists from threats, intimidation and violence, both in person and online.
7. Political parties, civil society and citizens should engage proactively in the exercising of their democratic rights and foster a wide-reaching national conversation around the constitutional referendum on European integration.

NDI's delegation was led by Pekka Haavisto, Member of the Finnish Parliament and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland and included: Joakim Edvardsson Reimar, former Swedish diplomat and Disinformation Expert; Eva Busza, NDI Regional Director of Eurasia; Richard L. Klein, NDI Global Director for Elections; and Martin Angeby, NDI Senior Resident Country Director for Moldova.

The NDI delegation conducted its activities in accordance with the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#) and the laws of Moldova and in reference to international and regional standards for elections as well as Moldova's electoral framework. Ultimately, it will be the people of Moldova who will determine the credibility of their elections and democratic development.

NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all. NDI has observed approximately 200 elections in every region in the world, including Moldova's 2019 parliamentary elections and 2020 presidential election. The Institute has carried out programs in Moldova since 2003.

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