

## **NDI International Election Observer Mission Presents Initial Findings and Recommendations Following the Elections in Moldova**

October 21, 2024

CHISINAU - The National Democratic Institute's international election observation mission (IEOM) in Moldova presented its initial findings and recommendations after the October 20 presidential election and constitutional referendum.

The 14-member delegation was co-led by Pekka Haavisto, Member of the Finnish Parliament and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and Stephanie Rust, NDI's Chief Programs Officer, and included experts in information environment, campaign financing, and the Moldovan electoral framework.

On election day, the mission deployed to all 32 raions, the municipalities of Chisinau and Balti, and the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia. NDI's observers assessed that the opening, voting, closing and counting in the polling stations visited were transparent, that the process was calm and orderly, and that election officials followed the proper procedures established by the Central Election Commission (CEC).

The delegation noted that the organization and administration of the election were conducted in an impartial and professional manner. At the same time, a number of issues of concern arose during the pre-election period that could undermine the credibility of the process.

"The greatest threat to the integrity of these elections has been a broad and concerted campaign of malign foreign influence from Russia collaborating with Moldovan actors through information manipulation, vote buying, and other illicit financing of political activity," said Mr. Haavisto. "Reports of a sustained, coordinated effort to corrupt voters' choices are concerning and we urge all Moldovans to refuse any attempt at voter corruption. If you sell your vote, you sell your freedom," he said.

Based on the CEC's preliminary results, on November 3 Moldovans will participate in a second round presidential election between President Maia Sandu and Alexandr Stoianoglo. Also, the delegation recognizes that the outcome of the referendum will not be decided based on preliminary results but on the official tabulation being conducted by the CEC.

"The NDI mission encourages both candidates to conduct peaceful campaigns that focus on the issues of importance to the Moldovan people, and for eligible voters to exercise their right to vote," said Ms. Rust. "For the referendum, the mission has all confidence that the CEC will undertake this process with the highest level of professionalism and impartiality, and urges all citizens and electoral actors to peacefully await the release of the official results."

The delegation congratulates the people, election authorities and political contestants of Moldova for conducting a participatory, well-organized and peaceful election. The statement

presented today is preliminary in nature and includes initial findings and recommendations that different stakeholders can take to enhance confidence in the tabulation and announcement of official results, and ensure a credible second round presidential election. The statement also includes recommendations to increase the inclusion, transparency and accountability of future election processes.

After arriving in Moldova on October 15, the delegation met with a wide array of electoral stakeholders, including from the CEC, political parties, civic organizations including citizen observer groups, government officials, law enforcement, and media practitioners.

The delegation's observations build upon the findings and recommendations of a high-level [pre-election assessment mission \(PEAM\)](#) conducted in September and were also informed by NDI's programmatic work in Moldova and ongoing monitoring efforts of the citizen election observation group Promo-LEX, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The mission conducted its activities on a strictly nonpartisan basis, without interfering in the election process, in accordance with Moldovan laws and the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#).

The mission will continue to follow electoral developments, including the tabulation of official results, adjudication of disputes, announcement of official results, the conduct of the second round, and swearing in of the next president, and may issue further statements and clarifications as needed. Upon the conclusion of the 2024 election process, including the November 3 presidential runoff, NDI will issue a comprehensive report detailing final findings and recommendations.

The delegation is grateful for the warm welcome and cooperation it received from all Moldovans with whom it interacted. The delegation's work was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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