

STATEMENT OF THE CIVIC COALITION FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

Interim observations at the midpoint of the 2025 parliamentary election campaign

[The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections](#) (CALC), a platform of civil society organizations that has monitored electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova for more than two decades, reaffirms its commitment to upholding international standards on free, fair, and inclusive elections, as promoted by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe.

By virtue of its mandate – grounded in the principles of legality, transparency, equal treatment of political actors, and respect for fundamental rights – CALC presents this interim statement at the midpoint of the campaign for the parliamentary elections of 28 September 2025.

The document synthesizes the factual findings of its member organizations and provides a picture of the progress made and the vulnerabilities identified to date.

General context of the campaign

The organization of the elections for the XII Legislature is taking place, overall, within a strengthened legal and institutional framework designed to curb electoral corruption and foreign interference in the electoral process. At the same time, the democratic resilience of institutions and society is being tested by internal and external factors. Major risks persist, such as coordinated disinformation from abroad, the use of non-transparent financial resources, and attempts to bribe voters.

It should be noted that institutional mobilization to protect the integrity of the electoral process, as provided by Article 28 of the Electoral Code, is more visible than in previous elections, and inter-institutional cooperation has intensified, creating the premises for a more solid framework to safeguard elections. However, the persistence of external interference requires constant vigilance and the rapid adaptation of response mechanisms to ensure that the elections take place within the boundaries of the rule of law and with respect for the will of the voters.

Legal framework and its application

The parliamentary elections of 28 September 2025 are being held on the basis of the Electoral Code that entered into force on 1 January 2023, applied for the first time in a parliamentary election. The pre-election period was marked by numerous legislative amendments, including in 2025, affecting both the Electoral Code and related legislation (Law on Political Parties, Contravention Code, Criminal Code, etc.). These introduced new elements, strengthening sanctions for electoral corruption, shortening the timeframes for addressing electoral corruption cases, and reinforcing tools to prevent illegal political financing. Notably, the extension of postal voting to four more countries, along with stricter verification of the eligibility of political entities – including “successor” parties – can contribute to increased accessibility, integrity, and transparency of the electoral competition.

However, some amendments were introduced relatively close to the campaign, affecting perceptions of the stability of the rules. Decisions on the registration of certain competitors based on confidential information raise questions about transparency and may fuel public



mistrust in an already fragile context. It remains to be seen how courts will ensure uniform and predictable application of the new provisions regarding “successor” parties.

Although the new legal framework is, overall, more robust than in previous elections and sets out more safeguards against abusive practices, it is essential to monitor its implementation. Respect for the rule of law and the non-discriminatory application of rules are fundamental conditions for the credibility of the electoral process. At the same time, it must be recognized that even improved laws do not provide full protection against all vulnerabilities, while risks related to illegal financing, information integrity, and electoral corruption attempts persist and may still undermine the integrity of the competition.

Performance of key electoral institutions

The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) exercises its responsibilities in full composition, with public meetings broadcast online, and the publication of follow-up acts and complaints represents an important step toward transparency. The General Police Inspectorate (IGP) has emerged as a stronger institution in promptly documenting contraventions, while coordination between the CEC, IGP, Prosecutor’s Office, Audiovisual Council, and the Information and Security Service (SIS) is visibly more effective. Self-restraint messages conveyed by religious denominations regarding non-involvement in the campaign are also a positive signal.

Nevertheless, the uniform application of the law across the entire country remains a challenge. Differences have been reported in the handling of public gatherings and in sanctioning the use of administrative resources. The absence of prompt and consistent responses can undermine perceptions of impartiality.

Campaign financing and electoral corruption

The financial reporting and control regime for political parties has become stricter, and decisions limiting access to the electoral competition for entities that fail to meet transparency standards confirm a firmer commitment by the CEC to the integrity of the electoral process.

Despite this, increasingly sophisticated schemes of electoral corruption have been observed, harder to document due to external ramifications: paid mobilization at protests, use of encrypted messaging apps for coordination and opaque financial transfers, simulated payments, and illegal collection of personal data. Intense political communication conducted before the official campaign, financed from sources whose reporting is delayed, creates a competitive imbalance and reduces transparency. In addition, the involvement of “third parties” in campaign activities, coupled with the absence of regulation, increases the risk of non-transparent financial resources and limits the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms.

Justice in an electoral year

Progress is observed in electoral justice mechanisms, where election-related cases are prioritized, courts have delivered the first final convictions for illegal financing, and contravention powers transferred to the IGP allow for faster responses to voter bribery. These are important signals for deterring electoral corruption. At the same time, judicial oversight of CEC decisions ensures additional protection of the right to run for office.

However, inconsistent decisions, including the review of a ruling by the Supreme Court of Justice, generate jurisprudential instability and weaken public trust.

Media and social networks

The national legal framework remains marked by several gaps in the effective regulation of all types of media. Although electoral legislation imposes general principles on all media entities regarding election coverage, written and especially online media remain outside an effective monitoring system, unlike traditional TV and radio broadcasters, which fall under the supervision of the Audiovisual Council (CA). In May 2025, for the first time, the CA sanctioned a non-linear provider for broadcasting disguised political advertising in an online audiovisual news program.

Authorities have updated audiovisual legislation, transposing EU standards for non-linear media platforms and reinforcing the rules on electoral coverage by media outlets. These changes aim to ensure more clarity, fairness, and transparency in presenting electoral competitors and managing audiovisual content. However, the real impact of the reforms depends on their consistent and non-discriminatory implementation.

Most television stations in the Republic of Moldova covered the campaign with deviations from the CEC Regulation on election coverage by media, and cases of non-compliance with the Audiovisual Media Services Code were also reported. Some media outlets covered most electoral competitors in their news and programs, while others focused predominantly on the activities of electoral institutions, thereby limiting public access to information about campaign activities. In certain cases, political bias in favor of some competitors was noted.

This campaign is also marked by the intensive use of online platforms, including social networks, by parties and candidates to disseminate information, organize voter meetings, and mobilize supporters – materials that often serve as sources for traditional media. Civil society monitoring indicates deviations and risks related to political discourse and the use of online resources, such as polarizing rhetoric bordering on hate speech, disinformation campaigns, and the distribution of fake content aimed at undermining trust in institutions.

Hate speech and attacks on civil society

Monitoring indicates an increase in hate speech and discriminatory language, as well as the use of violent rhetoric by some political actors. Incidents of intimidation and attacks on journalists, observers, and civic activists are unacceptable in a functioning democracy and must be sanctioned promptly. The electoral climate must remain open and safe for all participants in the process.

Inclusiveness of the electoral process

The 30% increase in the number of polling stations abroad and the implementation of postal voting represent concrete steps to strengthen the voting rights of citizens living outside the country. Progress is also noted in making polling stations accessible for persons with disabilities, as well as in respecting gender quotas and placement rules on candidate lists, leading to an increase in the number of women candidates.

Nevertheless, gaps persist regarding the placement of women in winnable positions, gender stereotypes continue to affect equal participation, and the reduction in the number of polling stations for voters from the left bank of the Nistru – although motivated by security concerns and declining turnout in previous elections – risks being perceived as a disproportionate restriction of voting access if not accompanied by strong public communication.



Recommendations for the period until election day

CALC encourages authorities, institutions, media, electoral competitors, and citizens to actively contribute to strengthening the democratic climate and protecting the integrity of the elections:

1. **Authorities:** apply the law uniformly and predictably, communicate publicly the criteria for sensitive decisions, and firmly sanction the use of administrative resources, electoral corruption, and illegal content distribution.
2. **Courts:** maintain celerity and harmonize jurisprudence, protecting fundamental rights and avoiding contradictory decisions.
3. **Electoral competitors:** refrain from violent language, paid mobilizations, and disinformation; comply with financing rules and advertising labeling requirements.
4. **Media and online platforms:** transparently label political content, respect editorial standards, and protect journalistic sources.
5. **Observers and NGOs:** continue rigorous monitoring and balanced communication of findings.
6. **Citizens:** seek information from credible sources, report irregularities, and participate in voting.

CALC will continue to monitor the electoral process until the completion of the elections and will issue a final statement after election day.

The Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections is a permanent, voluntary entity composed of NGOs from the Republic of Moldova. The mission of the Coalition is to contribute to the development of democracy in the Republic of Moldova by promoting and conducting free and fair elections in line with ODIHR (OSCE), Council of Europe, and affiliated specialized institutions' standards.

www.alegeliber.md



Resources of the Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections members

1. Promo-Lex
 - a. [Report No. 1. Promo-LEX Observation Mission for the 28 September 2025 parliamentary elections.](#)
 - b. [Report No. 2. Promo-LEX Observation Mission for the 28 September 2025 parliamentary elections.](#)
 - c. [Report No. 3. Promo-LEX Observation Mission for the 28 September 2025 parliamentary elections.](#)
2. ADEPT Association
 - a. [ADEPT Analytical Note on polling stations abroad in the 2025 parliamentary elections.](#)
 - b. [ADEPT Analytical Note. Polling stations for citizens from the left bank of the Nistru.](#)
 - c. [CALC Statement on the intimidation incident of an observer.](#)
 - d. Website www.alegeri.md
3. Independent Journalism Center
 - a. [Media monitoring Report during the parliamentary election campaign of 28 September 2025, Report No. 1 / 29 August – 5 September 2025.](#)
4. Partnership for Development Center
 - a. [X-ray of the 2025 parliamentary elections: A detailed study on how women and men are represented on electoral lists.](#)
5. Independent Press Association
 - a. [Clean Parliament Initiative.](#)
6. Infonet Alliance
 - a. [National evaluation of polling station accessibility conducted in 2025 by Infonet Alliance.](#)