

ELECTIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DONOR COORDINATION MEETING no.4

11 June, 2008, 10:00

UN House, Conference Room

AGENDA

1. Welcome by UN Resident Coordinator and introduction of the UNDP Senior Electoral Expert
2. Update of current developments and activities of the CEC - by CEC Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Renata Lapti
3. Brief presentation of the draft concept paper for UN's Electoral Assistance
4. A round of updates by development partners (USAID, CoE, Hungarian Embassy)

Participants:

Kaarina Immonen	UN Resident Coordinator
Renata Lapti	Central Elections Commission
Doina Bordeianu	Central Elections Commission
Simion Terzioglo	IOM
Alexandru Mocanu	IOM
Jenő Kudrjávcev	Hungarian Embassy
Malin Lunden	SIDA
Andreas Johansson	SIDA
Ina Pislaru	USAID
Oleg Chirita	EC Delegation
Radivoje Grujic	Council of Europe
Carolina Blajin	Eurasia Foundation
Sorin Mereacre	Eurasia Foundation
Diana Zaharia	UK Embassy
Jean-Pierre Golubic	OSCE
Alexandru Stratulat	UN Coordination Office
Vitalie Vremis	UNDP
Ira Cebotari	UNDP

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome by UN Resident Coordinator and introduction of the UNDP Senior Electoral Expert

Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator, welcomed the participants and introduced the new UN Coordination Officer, Mr. Alexandru Stratulat, and the UNDP Senior Electoral Expert, Mr. Ole Holtved, who would work in close cooperation with CEC to advise on voter registration and develop the joint project proposal for Electoral Assistance. Ms. Immonen thanked Ms. Renata

Lapti for joining the meeting and offered the floor to present the progress CEC made in preparation to 2009 elections.

2. Update of current developments and activities of the CEC - by CEC Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Renata Lapti

On 15 May 2008 the Moldovan Parliament has adopted the Concept of State Information System "Elections". It ensures a legal basis and Governmental financial support for further actions in preparation to 2009 elections. According to the document the electronic Voters' Register should be put in place by 2009 elections. The state budget will cover one third of its cost in the amount of 33 mln lei. CEC has already prepared all necessary documents but needs donors' support in continuing this activity. The Register is seen as a solution to the main problem shown by international observers during last years' elections, namely the quality/imperfection of voters' lists.

Another issue which CEC focuses on is the need for training of electoral staff and voters. CEC is now working on a Training Plan, which includes two main activities:

1. Creation of a Centre for Continuous Training
2. Support of the Youth Voters Coordination Council

1. The Centre for Continuous Training will solve another issue raised by observers after 2007 elections – lack of trained electoral management staff, mostly among those delegated by political parties.

At the first stage CEC will organize a number of trainings at the local level in four territorial zones to get prepared for 2009 elections:

1) Training with electoral commissions staff, involving representatives from each rayon, from parliamentary factions and CEC (July 2008)

Training is organized with support from ACEEEO and ADEPT, courses will be provided by international and national experts, and representatives of CECs from Baltic States. Training will address in details such topics as Management of Elections, legal requirements, Cooperation with Mass-media and Civil society etc., and will focus on practical examples.

The secretaries of rayon councils have been very pleased to learn about this initiative, since they have primary responsibility for organizing elections at the local level. Moreover many of them are newly appointed and will benefit much from the training.

2) Training for judges involved in the electoral process (November 2008).

In this regard CEC benefits from support of the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission.

3) Training in finance for electoral management staff.

4) Trainings for national observers, to be organized by the Council of Europe.

5) *International conference with mass-media representatives.*

The aim is to help journalists to get specialized knowledge concerning electoral legislation, terminology etc. necessary to better reflect electoral process.

2. The Youth Voters Coordination Council was created ad-hoc, but is supported by the Council of Europe in its initiatives. Young voters have developed some project ideas, which will be placed on CEC's website and could be of interest for donors.

Discussions:

- What category of observers will be involved in the training organized by CEC, since Eurasia is also planning to train over 2000 observers from NGOs and to obtain accreditation for them? Ms. Lapti confirmed the interest to collaborate in this regard with Eurasia Foundation.
- Is there any statistics on how many young voters participated in elections, any prove of the need to work with them? CEC organized a survey in 2005 and placed the results on the website, and made an analysis in 2007, which shows the lowest rate of voters among young people below 35 years old. CEC tries to stimulate youth participation at the elections as voters but also to involve them in CEC's activity to demonstrate transparency of the election process.
- Mr. Mereacre recommended addressing the people with disabilities, which is also one of the recommendations of the Council of Europe. CEC has no sufficient funds for this but discussed the initiative to have interpreters for people with hearing disabilities during electoral TV debates. Eurasia Foundation is interested to offer financial support for this initiative and will collaborate with CEC.
- How CEC is going to involve in training electoral staff working abroad? The need to train Embassies' personnel will appear only when the Voters Register is in place. At this sage nothing more is planned.
- Is it enough time to put in place the Voters' Register by 2009 elections? The Concept approved by the Parliament obliges CEC to implement it. Meantime the work on Voters' Register has not stopped, for example the selection of IT specialists took place, the agreement with Moldtelecom for use of its network was established, and the Ministry of Information Development also confirmed that its part of work would be done in time. Nevertheless the success will depend much on donors' support, since only one third of funds needed are provided by the state budget.

3. Brief presentation of the draft concept paper for UN's Electoral Assistance

Mr. Vitalie Vremis, UNDP Portfolio Manager, made a brief presentation of the draft concept paper, which is a base for further discussions and development (attached separately).

4. A round of updates by development partners (USAID, CoE, Hungarian Embassy)

Eurasia Foundation has already experience in supporting civil society initiatives during elections and also has instruments to analyse media coverage during elections. Therefore it would be more efficient to work together with CEC in this area and use the mechanisms, which already exists. Eurasia provides trainings for national long-term and short-term observers, and legal assistance through a hot-line for voters.

At this stage Hungarian Government supports the first training with electoral staff planned for June 2008.

Council of Europe offers its assistance to CEC in preparation to trainings for judges (November 2008) and national observers (March 2009), and the Seminar on Electoral Code (October 2008). It supports capacity building of the Youth Voters Coordination Council and tries to help it to establish links with other organizations, like trade unions, which involve young people.

Updated matrix is attached in a separate document.

Ms. Kaarina Immonen concluded the meeting by congratulating CEC and its partners with the progress made so far, thanking all participants for active discussions, and inviting to further collaboration.