



Project ProDem 2 "Empower Youth for Active Citizenship in Moldova"

Press release

PRODEM YOUTH DOUBLE CHALLENGE: First time to vote and first time to observe the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova

The team of 145 national observers of 18-year-old was on duty during the parliamentary elections that took place on Sunday, 24 February 2019 in the Republic of Moldova. The present pool of young people forms nearly 5% of the total number of national observers, registered on behalf of the non-governmental organizations in the country. All young people were trained and followed the official accreditation procedure within the Central Election Commission in frame of the ProDEM 2 "Empower Youth" project, financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation and implemented by the Hilfswerk International with its partner associations "Speranta" and "Mostenitorii".

Being a part of the civil society election monitoring, the young ProDem observers contributed to the countries' democratic processes. The immediate result was that the young people, present at 56 election sections, located in 8 districts of the country directly observed the engagement of citizens in the election process, acquiring knowledge in the process, issues and irregularities that appear. In the longer term, the engagement of the young observers shall support the country in building electoral integrity and strengthening civil society's capacity to promote citizen participation, particularly youth participation. The impressions of youth were diverse, all noting the adherence to some important part of the decision making. **Ciobanu Cristina, 18 years old, from village Salcuta, Causeni district** noted: *"This year I had the opportunity to go for the first time to vote and at the same time, I had the opportunity to participate in the elections as a national observer in the ProDem 2 project. First of all, it was an unprecedented experience, succeeding in living indescribable feelings. I felt really good, because the members of the polling station accepted us with respect and in the warmest way. I enjoyed it very much, because I saw what problems can appear on election day, the obstacles faced by voters."*

Chioru Elena, 18 years old, Stefan Voda district, Talmaza village:

Being a national observer, I felt an important person in the Parliamentary Elections on February 24, 2019. In addition to the instructions that have prepared me for this important day, however, the greatest benefit was the test of being observer. During the 7 hours I had this job I discovered the following: I understood how it is right to go to the vote, I understood the rules in the electoral section. It was a major opportunity for me that will still catch me as a citizen of the Republic of Moldova.

Besides noting the overall impressions, some youth has already reported of some of irregularities and situation they had to cope with, such as:

Constantin Purice, 19 years, village Cobani, Glodeni district noted, the following "I feel very good as an observer, I felt respected by all members of the voting sections. Yet during the Election Day yesterday I have recorded some irregularities about which I have informed the chair of the electoral body, for example some people were taking pictures of their voting ballots. Personally, I consider that the young observers, representing the non-governmental associations are more responsible and impartial, comparing to those coming from political party observers. We as young people are more interested in our country's future. It was a great honor for me to be called national independent observer!"

Elena Bivol, 18 years, Costesti village, Ialoveni District noted that she brought the attention of the chairman of the commission on the difficulty to access the section by an old woman, who has been further assisted by electoral staff.

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By facilitating the participation of project beneficiaries as election observers the ProDEM 2 project ensured a maximum extent of capacity building for the young and first-time voters through direct participation at all levels and demonstrated how young voters of Moldova can and shall shape the future of their country.

The ProDEM 2 “Empower Youth for Active Citizenship in Moldova” project is implemented by Hilfswerk International in partnership with Public Associations “Speranta” and “Mostenitorii”, supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) with funds of Austrian Development Cooperation.

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