



20 September 2019

## Joint declaration on conducting and reflecting the electoral campaign without discrimination and hate speech

We, the **Office of the Ombudsperson,**

**The Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality,** and the **Agency of Interethnic Relations,** on issues of common fields of activities

**REAFIRMING** our commitment to respect for human rights and ensuring equality of all persons on the territory of the Republic of Moldova in political, economic, social, and cultural fields, as well as in other domains of life, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or other beliefs, sex, age, disability, opinion, political affiliation or other similar characteristics,

**SHARING** the idea that human dignity and personality, as well as political pluralism are the greatest values in a democratic state,

**REALISING** the negative effect and destructive impact of hate speech and actions instigating discrimination,

**AIMING** to prevent the use of discourse which is discriminatory, offensive, and inciting hatred as it is a manipulating tool over the course of electoral campaigns, provide the following recommendations:

**Political parties, political actors, electoral contenders, as well as persons working for them:**

- shall avoid approaching sensitive topics that could incite hatred, violence;
- shall not use stereotypes and prejudice in public statements;
- shall not use in electoral discourse the messages that may prompt lack of trust, hostility or rejection of a group;
- shall not use sexist images and those inciting hatred and discrimination in campaign materials;
- shall respect the dignity of all persons regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, gender, age, disability, spoken language, political affiliation or any other protected characteristics;
- shall use language promoting the inclusion of all groups in the society;
- shall take into account the introduction of practices in order to ensure representation that reflects the diversity of the population at all levels on their electoral lists;
- shall take into account the adoption or support of codes of conduct for electoral campaigns, which shall include a strategy on combating discrimination, harassment and discourse inciting hatred;
- shall not express or support ideas or theories about the superiority of a group of people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, other protected personal characteristics or association with them;

**Mass media:**

- shall refrain from using discriminatory language about the superiority of a group of people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, gender, age, spoken language, political affiliation and other protected personal characteristics or association with them;
- shall not spread discourse and messages of political actors containing expressions of hatred or discriminatory statements targeting certain categories of people;
- shall warn, each time, political actors that the use of the media for launching statements that are discriminatory and inciting hatred is unacceptable, and to moderate comments;

- shall cover responsibly, with requisite explanations and with critical reflection, sensitive issues concerning a certain group, in order to avoid their stigmatisation.

**Civil society:**

- shall not tolerate political actors' discriminatory behaviour and statements, regardless of their political affiliation;
- shall monitor the conduct of political actors during the electoral campaign and report every violation in this regard.

**Voters:**

- shall disapprove discourse that is discriminatory, offensive and inciting hatred;
- shall penalise electoral contenders who are using messages or statements that are discriminatory, inciting hatred, social division, or harassment.

Drawing on the complex mandate of the **Office of the Ombudsperson and the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality,**

we complement the range of recommendations:

**Central Electoral Commission**

- shall organise consultations with political parties and representatives of the mass media, encouraging that they adopt norms of conduct, which would exclude any expression of discourse that is discriminatory and inciting hatred;
- shall organise, with the Centre for continuous training in the electoral field, trainings for actors involved in the electoral process and representatives of the mass media on the topic of discourse that is discriminatory and inciting hatred.

**Broadcasting Council**

- shall closely monitor electoral broadcasts in order not to allow the propagation, incitement, promotion or justification of racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of hatred based on intolerance

or discrimination on protected characteristics. In case of detection, it shall apply sanctions provided for in the law.

### **Criminal prosecution bodies**

- in case of detection of messages that are discriminatory or inciting hatred, shall intervene per their competences in order to stop and prevent these messages.

### **Parliament**

- shall expedite the adoption of the package of laws on hate crimes and prejudice.