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ЛОКАЛНИ ИЗБОРИ 2017

INTERIM ELECTION MONITORING REPORT (25 SEPTEMBER – 4 OCTOBER)

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📅 08.Oct.2017

Since the beginning of the election campaign the Citizens Association MOST has deployed 80 long-term observers who cover all the municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia. These observers monitor the work of the election administration and the election campaign.

1.108 reports Election Campaign Reports and 357 Reports on the Activities in the Municipalities were received from the observers, and subsequently analyzed. From the reports it can be concluded that the first part of the election campaign was generally relaxed among the citizens with intensive activities of various type by the election contestants – from door-to-door to bigger party rallies. Joint activities of the candidates for mayors in some municipalities have been noticed, such as joint actions for collecting litter, public coffee meetings, signing of joint declarations and joint meetings with citizens.

On 12 September the Government adopted an Instruction on the conduct of the ministries, other state bodies and administrative organization, as well as an Instruction for ban of the usage of movable and immovable state property during the elections. These instructions were adopted on the basis of the measures foreseen with the Plan 3-6-9 aimed at securing the separation between the state and the political parties. As for this part of the election process, several isolated cases of misuse of public resources were noticed during the campaign, predominantly by mayors who are running for office.

A pressure to attend party event in one municipality, and organizing party events during the working hours have been noticed in 2 municipalities by mayors of VMRO-DPMNE, as well as one case of blackmailing for voting for an independent candidate.

We were also witnesses of vandalizing of 10 local party HQs of the four biggest political parties in 8 municipalities, as well as destroying propaganda material in 6 municipalities.

As for the work of the election administration, some of the decisions of the State Election Commission were adopted on sessions for which the observers were not informed. Additionally, the SEC does not adopt its minutes in a timely manner, which does not provide for comprehensive monitoring of its work, while some of the adopted decisions and reports are not published on its web-page.

On these elections 3.480 new Election Boards were formed by the municipal election commissions, since the mandate of the previous elections boards has expired. MOST monitored the process of forming the election boards by 48 MECs and the greater part of them conducted it according to the Election Code, contrary to the practice in the previous election processes when several irregularities were noticed. Owing to a misleading instruction by the official persons three MECs elected EB members with lower education level than required, while three MEC in certain moments from the procedure elected EB members without the needed quorum of 3 members.

The Election Code was amended during the elections with the aim to change the provisions related to the SEC composition, in order to include a representative from the second biggest opposition party in the Parliament. The amendment foresees adjusting of the SEC composition by the Parliament during the elections, which does not fully regulate this issue. Therefore, an additional clarification of these provisions is needed. The Election Code should not be amended during elections.

During the election campaign an incident occurred in which a mayor and election contestant was injured in a brawl between two groups. The swift reaction of the Ministry of Interior to resolve this case is to be commended. Beside this, in the recent period a shootout occurred, in which one carrier of independent candidate list was shot, and later died. According to the statement given by the Minister of Interior, the shootout was not related to the elections.

The Citizens Association MOST strongly condemns violence of any kind and appeals to the election contestants not to misuse these and similar events in election context. At the same time, we appeal to the relevant institutions to thoroughly investigate these events.

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The content of this press-release is responsibility of MOST and it does not necessarily represent the views of the supporters of the project.

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