



CONCEPT NOTE

Election Considerations and Lessons Learned in 2020: *Romanian Experience*

21 of January 2021, 09:45 - 12:00 (Washington time), 16:45-19:00 (Bucharest time)

In 2020 the world became unrecognisable, as many countries felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus had a major and significant influence on many aspects of democracy around the world.

The actions of the countries focused either on postponing elections or on implementing special measures designed to ensure the safety of citizens and staff involved in the electoral processes.

Conducting electoral processes in 2020 required an increased level of adaptability and heightened attention on behalf of the governments and of election authorities in order to rapidly offer the best democratic solutions, to overcome any inherent issue and at the same time to comply with the public health protocols.

Given the unprecedented nature of these challenges, understanding how the states actioned during organizing elections in pandemic times is highly important.

The diversity of electoral systems requires the enlargement of the electoral cooperation area. In this context, the exchange of expertise represents a basic tool for conducting comparative analyzes of elections, as well as a transparency indicator, elements that contribute to the evolution of democracy worldwide.

COVID-19 has been a test for the electoral management bodies that were in the position to create and implement crisis management plans meant to both respond to the pandemic requirements and to respect the laws and citizens' rights.

In Romania, the implications of COVID-19 placed a huge set of responsibilities on the Permanent Electoral Authority, as well as on the partner institutions involved in organization of the electoral

processes. In 2020 Romania held two types of electoral processes: Local elections on 27th of September and Parliamentary elections on 6th of December.

In the spirit of collegiality and taking the opportunity to create a suitable platform for discussions about the election experiences in 2020, the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems decided to organise on 21 of January 2021 the online event on **Election Considerations and Lessons Learned in 2020: Romanian Experience**.

Objective

The purpose of the online event on *Election Considerations and Lessons Learned in 2020: Romanian Experience* organised by the Permanent Electoral Authority in partnership with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems is to provide the election management bodies (EMBs) and other stakeholders an overview of the many actions and issues that need to be considered when managing election processes within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sessions of the event are projected to emphasize the careful balance required between protecting the health and safety of citizens and safeguarding democratic rights and freedoms through the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections.

This online debate among professional election practitioners aims also to foster knowledge exchange between EMBs and electoral experts on using a variety of special voting arrangements while organizing elections under strict health restrictions.

Participants

The online conference will gather EMBs officials and experts, representatives on behalf of international organisations with responsibilities in election field, NGOs and interested stakeholders.

Topics to be discussed on Thursday, 21 of January, between 09:45 - 12:00 (Washington time) respectively 16:45-19:00 (Bucharest time) are related to the:

- Civic education and voter information: ways to communicate with voters and citizens engagement;
- Legal framework and legislative amendments;
- Voting methods and IT&C solutions to cast the vote and to prevent the illegal voting;
- Logistical arrangements: challenges faced and election cycle.

Organisers

The **Permanent Electoral Authority**, is an autonomous administrative institution with legal personality and general competence in electoral matters, whose mission is to ensure the organization and conduct of elections and referendums, as well as the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns, in compliance with the Constitution, law and of international and European standards in this area. The Permanent Electoral Authority carries out its activity in compliance with the principles of independence, impartiality, legality, transparency, efficiency, professionalism, responsibility, sustainability, predictability and legitimacy.

The **International Foundation for Electoral Systems** advances democracy for a better future. IFES collaborates with civil society, public institutions and the private sector to build resilient democracies that deliver for everyone. As the global leader in the promotion and protection of democracy, the technical assistance and applied research develops trusted electoral bodies capable of conducting credible elections; effective and accountable governing institutions; civic and political processes in which all people can safely and equally participate; and innovative ways in which technology and data can positively serve elections and democracy. Since 1987, IFES has worked in more than 145 countries, from developing to mature democracies.

Event format

- presentations, Q&A and conclusions;
- time dedicated: approximatively 2,15 h;
- Microsoft Teams platform hosted by the Permanent Electoral Authority;
- working language: English;
- live streaming on PEA official YouTube channel;
- the summary report of the conference will be available to the participants.

Contact persons

Contact person on behalf of PEA Romania - Ion Mincu-Rădulescu, Director, International Cooperation Department - e-mail: ion.mincu@roaep.ro, international.cooperation@roaep.ro
phone no. + 40 720.020.000

Contact person on behalf of IFES - Anthony C. Bowyer, Europe & Eurasia Advisor- e-mail: ABowyer@ifes.org, phone no. + 1 202.350.6821