



RECOMMENDATION

ON INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF APPLYING SOCIOLOGY IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Regarding the high importance of voter's confidence in election process, the General Assembly Meeting of the Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO) calls its Members to consider applying results of social sciences. We believe the following recommendations could facilitate to understand voters' way of thinking of the election processes, and as such EMBs can gain future benefits to their job by using this sociological knowledge. The recommendations of the sociological department of the 18th ACEEEO conference are the following:

- 1) The Central Election Commissions should initiate (if they have the possibility) more surveys regarding voters' habits and publish these results. These surveys should exclude politics, rather it should measure the difference regarding interest in political issues in different age groups. The aim is to understand voters' habits and thinking. The methods that are to be applied are: in-depth interviews, focus group researches (qualitative methods, not quantitative methods).
- 2) We advise to start researches dealing with introduction of e-voting. This method could reach younger voters, especially first time voters via Internet. Youngsters are very important regarding future of elections and E-voting could decrease the number of electoral frauds. All of these arguments initiate managing researches in this field.
- 3) We also advise to inform voters on an intensive way (mass media, flyers, advertisement, etc) about the election procedure because voters are quite disappointed in politics and in elections in more countries. With this intensive information trust in political processes, especially in election processes could be re-established. This is the reason why civic education and first time voters' education bears an extraordinary importance.

- 4) Considering that we are in the 21st Century, Internet is very useful regarding transparency of elections (public databases, full voters' list, etc.). This way of spreading information and make lists public and accessible on a well secured website would encourage voters and foster them to participate.
- 5) The participating sociologists of the 18th ACEEEO conference recommend more cooperation between the Commissions and the civil society. More transparency regarding electoral processes, involving civil society and mass media is a must in order to increase voters' turnout.
- 6) Exit polls' surveys and recounting votes could play a positive role to strength the confidence in sociological surveys accompanying the election processes.