

**Evolution of the Body of Electoral Experts (EEC) in Romania
in the period 2016-2020**

Alexandra IANCU

Page | 117

ABSTRACT

The Body of Electoral Experts (EEC) is a permanent record of persons who may become presidents of communal, city, municipal constituency electoral bureaux, polling stations of the country and abroad or their deputies, established, managed and updated by The Permanent Electoral Authority in accordance with the provisions of art. 16 of Law no. 208/2015 and of the PEA AEP Decision no. 11/2015 on the approval of the Methodology for admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts, with subsequent amendments and completions.

In this article, an analysis is made of the Corps of Electoral Experts from the establishment until 2020. The analysis takes into account the graduated studies, the environment of origin (urban / rural), the age of the people who register.

Starting with the general elections of 2016, for the first time the presidents of the electoral bureaux of the polling stations and their deputies were appointed by the Permanent Electoral Authority, in public session, announced 48 hours in advance before, by computerized lottery, organized at county level or at the level of the municipality of Bucharest 15 days before the election date, by positions, from the persons registered in the electoral experts body with domicile or residence in the respective county, based on the criterion of approaching the domicile or residence of the polling station, as well as on the criterion of completed studies.

KEYWORDS: *favourable opinion, examination, Corps of electoral experts, admission, termination, exclusion, evolution.*



1.Introduction

The Permanent Electoral Authority manages the Corps of Electoral Experts, which includes the following identification data of the registered persons: name, surname, personal numerical code, domicile, residence, occupation, profession, telephone and e-mail address.

A person who meets the following conditions may be admitted to the Body of Electoral Experts, by decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority:

- a) has Romanian citizenship;
- b) knows the Romanian language, written and spoken;
- c) has the right to vote;
- d) has a state of health corresponding to the fulfilment of the function;
- e) is not a member of a political party;
- f) has a bachelor's degree in the field of legal sciences or in other fields;
- g) is not prosecuted, indicted or convicted.

Admission to the Body of Electoral Experts is made on the basis of the favourable opinion granted by the Permanent Electoral Authority for the previous activity as president of the electoral bureau of the polling station or his/her deputy, or on the basis of examination, by submission to the Permanent Electoral Authority, in writing, or in electronic form, no later than 45 days before the date of the election, of a written application, dated and signed, containing the name, surname, personal numerical code, domicile, residence, occupation, profession, telephone and e-mail address , accompanied by a declaration that the conditions set out in points (a) to (g) are met.

2.Situation of entries and exits from the body of electoral experts in 2020

In 2020, 10.962 applications were submitted for admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts in the country. Of these, 10.686 applications for admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts in the country were processed, verified and analysed, of which 511 based on a favourable opinion and 10,175 based on an examination.

There were 278 waivers of applications submitted before entering the approval procedure.

In 2020, following the process of verification and analysis of applications for admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts, 10.551 persons were admitted to the Corps of Electoral Experts, as follows: 397 persons admitted on the basis of favourable opinion and 10.154 persons admitted on the basis of examination.

In 2020, 53 decisions to terminate the status of electoral expert¹ and 15 decisions to exclude from the Corps of Electoral Experts were adopted².

Regarding the overall situation of the decisions regarding the termination of the quality of electoral expert, respectively the exclusion from the Body of electoral experts issued in 2020, it is presented as follows:

TERMINATIONS OF ELECTORAL EXPERT QUALITY IN 2020		
The reason for the termination of the quality of electoral expert	Number of decisions issued	Number of people whose electoral expert status has ceased
Personal reasons (increased risk of getting sick with SARS COV 2, going abroad, incompatibility with the candidate spouse, medical worker / army / MIA, no longer wanting, no longer coping with stress, etc.)	10	1.510
Failure to meet the conditions provided by art. 16 para. (1) of Law no. 208/2015, with subsequent amendments and completions.	24	2.370
Death	19	189
TOTAL	53	4.069

¹ According to art. 21 para. (1) of the AEP Decision no. 11/2015, with subsequent amendments and completions, the termination of the quality of expert takes place in the following cases: a) death; b) non-fulfillment of any of the conditions provided by art. 16 para. (1) of Law no. 208/2015, with subsequent amendments and completions; c) withdrawal from the Corps of Electoral Experts.

² According to art. 16 para. (9) of Law no. 208/2015, with the subsequent amendments and completions, the exclusion from the body of electoral experts is made in case of committing contraventions regarding the elections or referendums.

EXCLUSIONS FROM THE BODY OF ELECTORAL EXPERTS IN 2020		
Reason for exclusion	Number of decisions issued	Number of people excluded
Contravention sanction	15	39

3. Evolution of entries and exits from the body of electoral experts in the year in the period 2016-2020

From the point of view of the evolution of entries and exits from the Corps of Electoral Experts since its establishment in 2016 and until now, it is noted that in 2020, the number of people who expressed their intention to join the EEC and have been admitted in this Corps was a considerably higher one compared to the years in which no electoral processes are organized, but higher compared to the 2019 election year, as follows:

*Decisions on admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts and
the number of persons admitted 2016-2020*

An	Număr decizii de admitere în CEE	Număr persoane admise în CEE
2016	↑ 74	61.756
2017	↓ 17	↓ 223
2018	↓ 22	↓ 1.531
2019	↓ 33	↑ 9.588
2020	↑ 90	↑ 10.551
TOTAL	236	83.649

On the other hand, the number of persons for whom the quality of electoral expert was terminated is similar compared to 2019, with the specification that for a considerable number of persons the quality of electoral expert was terminated due to non-fulfilment of the condition provided by art. 16 para. (1) lit. e) of Law no. 208/2015, with subsequent amendments and completions, being candidates in the local elections in 2020 for some political parties.



Decisions regarding the finding of the cessation of the quality of electoral expert and the number of persons whose quality of electoral expert ceased 2016-2020

An	Număr decizii privind constatarea încetării calității de expert electoral	Număr persoane încetate
2016	↓ 9	↓ 610
2017	→ 25	↓ 1.013
2018	→ 27	↓ 1.581
2019	↑ 47	↑ 3.819
2020	↑ 53	↑ 4.069
TOTAL	161	11.092

Exclusion decisions from the Corps of Electoral Experts and the number of excluded persons 2016-2020

An	Număr decizii privind excluderea din CEE	Număr persoane excluse
2016	↓ 5	↑ 148
2017	↓ 1	↓ 10
2018	↓ 2	↓ 3
2019	→ 7	↑ 166
2020	↑ 15	↓ 39
TOTAL	30	366

4. Evolution of the number of persons enrolled in the body of electoral experts and its structure in the period 2016-2020 (persons with admitted and suspended status)

Since the establishment of the Corps of Electoral Experts and until now, an exponential increase in the number of people registered in this database can be observed in the electoral years, the interest being lower in the years when no elections are organized.

It is worth mentioning that this aspect can become problematic given that a longer time is needed for the training of newly admitted persons in the Corps of Electoral Experts, this being more difficult to achieve only during the electoral period, all the more so an epidemiological

context in which the number of people who can participate is limited, in order to comply with the public health measures and actions necessary to be observed for the safe carrying out conduct of training sessions.

Regarding the evolution of the structure of the Corps of Electoral Experts, depending on the studies of registered persons, there can be a considerable increase in the number of people with undergraduate studies in other fields than legal (7.147 people from 2016 to the end of 2020), and less than half of this increase (42.68%) for people with a bachelor's degree in law (3.051 people from 2016 to the end of 2020).

Regarding the background of electoral experts, in the reference period, it can be noted that if in 2016-2017 most of the electoral experts came from rural areas, currently, although electoral experts who come from rural areas according to domicile is still higher, there can be a considerable increase in the number of people enrolled in the Corps of Electoral Experts who come from urban areas according to domicile. Thus, the number of registered persons from urban areas according to domicile increased by 14.677 persons from 2017 until the end of 2020.

For the electoral processes in 2020, the highest percentage of ballot suspensions was registered, namely 15.28% of the total number of persons admitted to the election of local public administration authorities, respectively 14.58% to the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Among the reasons invoked were: - incompatibility with the candidate's spouse, relatives, and relatives of the candidates, - fear of becoming ill with SARS-COV 2; - other medical problems; departures abroad, etc.

5. Conclusions:

The Corps of Electoral Experts appoints the persons as presidents and deputy presidents of the electoral bureaux of the polling stations organized for the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020. These amounted to 60,880 people.

Between September 28 and December 6, 2020, following the process of verification and analysis of applications for admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts, AEP issued 6 decisions

for admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts based on favourable opinion and 18 admission decisions based on examination³. According to them, 3,610 persons were admitted to the EEC, as follows: 98 persons admitted on the basis of a favourable opinion and 3,512 persons admitted on the basis of an examination.

Of these, 70.97% are women (43,208 people) and 29.03% are men (17,672 people). The largest share is held by women from rural areas, namely 27.69% of the total electoral experts entered in the appointment/nomination procedure, followed by those from urban areas 33.29%. Out of the total number of electoral experts entered in the appointment/nomination procedure, the largest share is represented by people from rural areas, namely 51.88%.

Out of the total of 60,880 people available for appointment as president / deputy of the electoral bureau of the polling station / replacements at the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020, the largest share is held by persons with undergraduate studies in other fields (53.08%), followed by those with compulsory general education (28.41%), and by those with bachelor's degree in legal sciences (18.51%).

Out of the total of 60,880 electoral experts entered in the appointment/nomination procedure, the largest share is held by those aged between 45 and 54 (33.28%) and those aged between 35 and 44 (25.67%), followed by those aged between 18 and 34 (18.77%), those aged between 55 and 64 (16.25%) and those over 65 (6.03%).

As for the persons who actually exercised the function of president of the electoral bureau of the polling station, respectively deputy president at the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020, they amounted 37,604.

Out of the total of 37,604 people who held the position of president of the electoral bureau of the polling station, respectively its deputy president, the largest share is represented by persons aged between 35 and 54 years (62.18%), followed by those aged between 18 and 34 (18.43%), those aged between 55 and 64 (15.19%), and those over 65 (4.20%).

³ The decisions regarding the admission in the Corps of electoral experts are displayed, according to art. 16 of Law no. 208/2015, with subsequent amendments and completions, on the AEP website, under the heading Electoral Experts Corps (<http://www.roaep.ro/logistica/management-electoral/corpul-expertilor-electorali/>).

REFERENCES:

1. Permanent Electoral Authority website of the institution - www.roaep.ro.
2. Activity report of the Permanent Electoral Authority for 2020.
3. Report on the organization and conduct of elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020.
4. Law no. 208/2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as for the organization and functioning of the Permanent Electoral Authority.
5. Decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority No. 11/2015 regarding the approval Methodology of admission to the Corps of Electoral Experts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Alexandra Iancu, PhD, is assistant at the Faculty of Public Administration within the National School of Political and Administrative Studies and parliamentary advisor at the Permanent Electoral Authority.

E-mail: a_cristescu02@yahoo.com