



## INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

### Press Release

## MONTENEGRO'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION GENERALLY IN LINE WITH COMMITMENTS FOR DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

**Podgorica, 23 April 2001** – The 22 April 2001 parliamentary election in Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was generally in line with international commitments for democratic elections, concluded the International Election Observation Mission in a statement issued in Podgorica today (attached).

“The overall electoral process was pluralistic, accountable and transparent”, said Tiit Käbin, Vice-president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Special Co-ordinator designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office for the parliamentary election in Montenegro. “This positive assessment confirms the progress observed during last year’s local elections, though some shortcomings remain.” This conclusion is fully endorsed by the Council of Europe.

The international observers noted that the election was marked by the participation of a broad spectrum of political parties, a pluralistic media landscape, and exceptional transparency regarding public access to voter registers and the publication of detailed voting results at all levels. The legislative framework provided a largely adequate basis for democratic elections.

Problems noted by the international observers include the control of election mandates by political parties and a small number of errors in the voter register, as well as few instances of political pressure on state employees, police involvement in campaign activities and inflammatory rhetoric. Also, all print media failed to observe the pre-election campaign silence.

On election day, the polling and vote count were largely in accordance with the law; only few isolated shortcomings were observed. The high voter turnout indicates confidence in the electoral process.

The International Election Observation Mission stresses that, given the overall strength of the electoral framework, the few remaining problems could not impact significantly on the results of the election. Nevertheless, the Montenegrin authorities should address these concerns urgently and thoroughly.

## **Mission Information**

The International Election Observation Mission is a joint undertaking of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

Mr. Tiit Käbin, Vice President of the OSCE PA and Special Co-ordinator for this election designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. Mr. Claude Frey heads the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Mr. Tomas Jirsa leads the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe delegation. Mr. Nikolai Vulchanov heads the long-term OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission in Montenegro.

For further information, please contact:

- OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission in Podgorica, +381-81-623 303 (until 26 April 2001)
- Jens-Hagen Eschenbächer, Spokesperson, OSCE/ODIHR, +48-603 683 122
- Jan Jooren, Counsellor, OSCE PA, +381-69552679
- John Hartland, Counsellor, Council of Europe PA, +33 608 738 631