

Democratic elections in Romania overshadowed by highly charged political atmosphere, observers say

BUCHAREST, 10 December 2012 – Romania demonstrated a pluralistic political culture and an established democratic process in the 9 December parliamentary elections, concluded observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in a statement released today. Following a heated political summer, the parliamentary campaign was a remarkably low-key affair, observers said, adding that the continuation of a highly-charged political atmosphere, with sharp rhetoric and reported pressure on authorities undermined confidence but did not challenge the overall conduct of democratic elections.

“These elections were a convincing demonstration that Romania benefits from established structures for the conduct of elections,” said Mr. Wolfgang Grossruck, Head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly limited election observation mission. “The ability to deliver democratic elections in the current highly polarized environment indicates that Romania has strong potential to overcome challenges.”

The election campaign was largely overshadowed by the power struggle between the President of Romania and the Prime Minister, said the observers. Most interlocutors commented on the relative lack of a genuine debate on policies. The pluralistic press reflected the wide spectrum of views, often clearly supporting different political forces, said the mission.

The election system is complex and has been amended in the course of this year by emergency government ordinances. A consolidation of the electoral procedures is widely anticipated, and observers said they hope that this will lead to greater confidence on the part of the public.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe deployed a limited election observation delegation to Romania following an invitation from the Romanian authorities.

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