

Montenegro referendum meets international standards



Professor Nevzat Yalcintas delivers the conclusions of the mission on behalf of the OSCE, along with Jelko Kacin of the European Parliament, Jean-Charles Gardetto of the Council of Europe PA, and Jørgen Grunnet, from the OSCE/ODIHR.

Delivering the preliminary statement of the International Referendum Observation Mission for the referendum on the state-status of Montenegro, PA Vice-President Nevzat Yalcintas announced that “In a demonstration of direct democracy, the people of Montenegro conducted a genuine and transparent referendum, and should be congratulated for their constructive approach in making this historic decision.” Professor Yalcintas, appointed as the Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office to lead the OSCE short-term observers, was speaking at a press conference on May 22, in Podgorica.

In addition to leading the overall OSCE mission of 365 observers, Professor Yalcintas, along with Deputy-Head Jerry Grafstein, led the OSCE PA delegation of some 50 members.

Vice-President Yalcintas stressed that “This referendum was a unique event in a unique historical situation. Montenegrins undertook this process in a consensual manner, demonstrating to the world how such differences of opinion can be resolved peacefully.”

The observation mission noted the high interest, reflected in voter turnout of over 86% of the population, and the active and competitive campaign. The media provided voters with diverse views, enabling them to make informed choices

between the alternatives. Political parties had been offered the opportunity to inspect the voter register and to cross-check it with other data in advance, significantly contributing to the transparency of the voter list. Similarly, equal participation by both sides in the referendum administration at all levels contributed to confidence in the process.

The observation mission was a joint undertaking of the OSCE PA, the Council of Europe PA, and the European Parliament, with the support of the OSCE/ODIHR.



OSCE PA delegation present during Azerbaijan partial re-run

A small OSCE PA delegation visited Azerbaijan from 11 to 14 May for the partial re-run of the parliamentary elections which took place in November 2005. Joao Soares, Head of the Portuguese Delegation, was appointed by President Hastings to head the Delegation which also included Jaak Allik, Head of the Estonian Delegation, and Christian Miesch, Head of the Swiss Delegation. The purpose of the visit was to get an impression of the situation in the country following the OSCE PA Election Observation Mission which President Hastings led last November. The OSCE PA Members had joint briefings with the

Delegation of the PACE, which included meetings with the Chair of the Central Election Commission, representatives of parties, the OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission and representatives of domestic observers. The Delegation also met with the newly elected Azerbaijani OSCE PA Delegation.

On election day, Members of the Delegation visited polling stations and carried out limited observations in Baku and Sumgait. The Delegation will present its conclusions at the OSCE PA Annual Session in Brussels in July. Deputy Secretary General Tina Schøn accompanied the Delegation.