

Serbian election 'highly competitive,' democratic reforms not finished



Matteo Mecacci at a polling station in Belgrade.

Delivering the post-election statement on behalf of the OSCE at a press conference in Belgrade on 21 May, Matteo Mecacci (Italy) said that the second round of Serbia's presidential election on 20 May maintained the open, highly competitive character of the first round, but provided further indications that efforts are needed to enhance the integrity of the electoral process.

Mecacci, who served as head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's delegation and Special Co-ordinator, led the short-term OSCE observer mission and noted Serbia's sub-

stantial progress but said that challenges remain.

"This process of democratic reforms is not finished and must continue to face old and new challenges after this highly competitive election," Mecacci said.

Observers noted that contestants enjoyed equal opportunities for campaigning, which offered voters a distinct political choice. The media provided voters with a diversity of views, although active scrutiny of the campaign was lacking.

While contestants expressed general confidence in the election process prior to voting in the first round, from 9 May the campaign centered on allegations of election fraud made by four contestants, which other parties maintained were politically motivated. The performance of institutions in addressing these claims underscored the need for a more responsive system to resolve electoral disputes, observers said.

The OSCE PA observer delegation to Serbia's second round of voting consisted of nine participants including five parliamentarians, and worked in close co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR. The mission was supported by Deputy Director for Field Operations Roberto Montella from the OSCE PA's Vienna Office.

Parliamentary Team on Moldova, led by Habsburg Douglas, visits Chisinau and Tiraspol

The OSCE PA's Parliamentary Team on Moldova welcomed the resumption of the Transdniestria status negotiations and encouraged greater co-operation between Chisinau and Tiraspol upon concluding a three-day visit to the country.

The delegation led by Walburga Habsburg Douglas (Sweden) visited Chisinau and Tiraspol 16-18 May for meetings with the newly elected President Nicolae Timofti, Prime Minister Vlad Filat, Speaker of Parliament Marian Lupu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Iurie Leanca, the OSCE PA's Moldovan delegation, as well as representatives of the international community in Chisinau.

The delegation met with the chief negotiators in the Transdniestrian settlement process, Eugen Carpov and Nina Shtanski, and with Transdniestrian Leader Yevgeny Shevchuk

and representatives of the Supreme Soviet.

The team welcomed the resumption of the 5+2 negotiations, and encouraged establishing parliamentary contacts between Chisinau and Tiraspol. The delegation held consultations with the OSCE Mission to Moldova and counterparts in Chisinau on an OSCE PA resolution on Moldova to be debated at the Assembly's Monaco Annual Session in July 2012.

Members of the PA delegation included Viola von Cramon (Germany) and Alf Dubs (United Kingdom).

The visit was organized by the OSCE Mission to Moldova, led by Ambassador Jennifer Brush, with the support of the Parliament of Moldova. The Parliamentary Team was accompanied by OSCE PA Programme Director Anna Chernova.



Parliamentary Team and Ambassador Brush meeting Moldova's Prime Minister Vlad Filat.

Monaco Annual Session deadlines

Please note the following deadlines for the 21st Annual Session, to be held in Monaco on 5-9 July 2012:

- Hotel reservations Thursday 31 May
- Registration Thursday 31 May
- Supplementary items Thursday 31 May
- Compromise draft resolutions Thursday 21 June
- Amendments to the general committees' draft resolutions Thursday 21 June
- Amendments to supplementary items Thursday 28 June