

Soares: Progress in Georgian elections, but problems remain



Joao Soares addresses a post-election press conference in Tbilisi

Delivering the OSCE preliminary statement for the 21 May parliamentary elections in Georgia, OSCE PA Vice-President Joao Soares declared that “These elections were not perfect, but since I was here in January for the presidential election, concrete and substantial progress has been made.” Mr. Soares, who served as Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers and headed the OSCE PA delegation, also expressed his hope that “all political forces in this country will come together and continue to work to improve Georgia’s democracy.”

The International Election Observation Mission – composed of the OSCE PA, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, the European Parliament, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly – noted that voters were offered a wide array of choices to select their representatives and that parties were able to campaign actively. However, inconsistencies in the legal framework negatively affected its implementation, and unilateral changes to the electoral system shortly before the elections were seen by the opposition as favoring the ruling party.

Also of concern were the numerous accounts of intimidation that were reported, and the blurring of the line between state activities and the government party’s campaign. All of these issues led the IEOM to conclude that “distinct challenges remain to be addressed in order to overcome a lack of trust, and to instill broad confidence amongst election stakeholders and the public.”

Sixty-five parliamentarians participated in the observation mission, and were supported by four staff members from the PA’s Secretariat: Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen, Director of Communications Klas Bergman, Programme Officer Anna Chernova and Logistics Officer Petra Jezkova.

Pia Christmas-Moeller to lead election observation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Pia Christmas-Moeller has been appointed OSCE Special Co-ordinator by the OSCE’s Chairman-in-Office, Finland’s Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, for the parliamentary elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 1 June.

Ms. Christmas-Moeller, a member of the Danish parliament and Vice-President of the OSCE PA, also heads the OSCE PA election observer team for FYROM. As Special Co-ordinator she will lead the OSCE short-term observers in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and will deliver the preliminary post-election statement the day after the elections.

The OSCE observation mission is a joint undertaking of the OSCE PA and the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, whose long-term observer mission is headed by Ambassador Robert Barry. Ambassador Andreas Nothelle, head of the OSCE PA’s Liaison Office in Vienna, is responsible for the organizing of the PA’s election observation mission. He will be joined by Andreas Baker, the PA’s Presidential Advisor, and Research/Publications Officer Nat Parry.



Pia Christmas-Moeller discusses the Macedonian elections with Secretary General Spencer Oliver, April 2008

Deadlines approaching for the Annual Session in Astana

We kindly remind all Delegations that deadlines are approaching for the Seventeenth Annual Session to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, from 29 June to 3 July. Please make a note of the following dates.

Deadline for registration of Delegates: 1 June
Deadline for presenting Supplementary Items: 8 June
Deadline for Amendments to the Draft Resolutions: 15 June
Deadline for Amendments for Supplementary Items: 22 June

Our website, www.oscepa.org, has additional practical information on registration and hotel accommodations.