

Moldova's elections met many standards, but underscore need for democratic reform

The 29 July parliamentary elections in Moldova met many international standards, but the process underscored the need for continued democratic reforms to restore public trust, the international election observation mission concluded in a preliminary statement issued today.

The election was overall well-administered, allowing for competition of political parties representing a plurality of views. The observers stressed that the campaign was negatively affected by subtle intimidation and media bias.

"I am encouraged by the conduct of these elections. Many OSCE commitments were met, but important challenges remain if the lack of trust among the country's political parties and voters is to be overcome so that Moldova's democracy can continue to improve," said Petros Efthymiou, head of the OSCE PA delegation and Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers.

The observers noted that election day was well-organized and calm, and proceedings were generally assessed as positive. While the campaign took place in a highly polarized atmosphere, candidates were overall able to campaign across the country. The misuse of administrative resources, however, had a negative effect on the equality of campaign opportunities.



OSCE Special Co-ordinator Petros Efthymiou in Chisinau on 30 July with PACE's Mevlut Cavusoglu.

Methods of subtle pressure and intimidation were used by the authorities to control the campaign environment.

The media offered voters information about key contestants, but the main TV channels failed to provide impartial and balanced coverage, favouring the ruling party both in terms of time and tone.

Election administration bodies operated transparently and overall in a professional manner. Despite some efforts to improve the quality of voter lists, voter registration lacked uniformity and observers identified shortcomings in the accuracy of voter lists on election day.

In all, 300 short term observers from 40 countries were deployed on election day, including 38 from the OSCE PA, 16 from PACE, and 11 from the European Parliament. Voting was observed in some 1,000 polling stations out of a total of 1,986. The OSCE PA's mission was supported by Deputy Secretary General Tina Schoen, Director of Communications Klas Bergman, Programme Officer Anna Chernova, and Logistics Officer Petra Jezkova from the International Secretariat.

Annual contributions due by 1 October

Each Parliament's annual contribution for the next budget year is due on 1 October 2009, as the Assembly's newly elected Treasurer, Roberto Battelli, has informed everyone in a recent letter to all member delegations of the Assembly.

The budget, proposed by Treasurer Hans Raidel and Secretary General Spencer Oliver, was unanimously approved at the Annual Session in Vilnius. The approved budget is the same as the one for the current financial year, despite the increase in PA activities. That means that national contributions remain unchanged. The reason for this freeze is due to the current world financial crisis.



New Treasurer Roberto Battelli

Events in the autumn

This issue of *News from Copenhagen* will be the last until the beginning of September when it resumes its regular schedule. Many staff at the International Secretariat in Copenhagen will be on vacation, although the Secretariat will continue to be open, albeit with reduced working hours.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the dates of some events during the autumn.

The Fall Meetings, with the Fall Conference, the Standing Committee, and the Mediterranean Forum, take place in Athens 9 to 12 October.

The next Bureau meeting will also be held in Athens, on 30 November, in conjunction with the OSCE Ministerial Council 1-2 December.