

## Observers: Moldova run-off competitive, but harsh rhetoric detracts from process



Arta Dade and Geir Joergen Bekkevold, Chisinau, 14 Nov. 2016

The second round of the presidential election in Moldova was competitive, with respect for fundamental freedoms, international observers concluded in a preliminary statement presented by Arta Dade (MP, Albania), the Special Co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observer mission, on Monday. However, increasingly polarized media coverage and continued instances of abuse of administrative resources detracted from the process. Complaints, mostly related to campaign finance, were not resolved in a timely and consistent manner, the statement said.

“The more intense campaign in the lead-up to the second round succeeded in mobilizing a greater number of voters and offered an opportunity for citizens to express their choice,”

Dade said. “This underlines a desire for continued civic mobilization, and I encourage the newly elected President to support the reforms needed to restore public confidence in state institutions.”

Technical preparations for the second round were generally administered professionally and, overall, the observers assessed election day positively. Despite some efforts to prepare for a high turnout abroad and for voters from Transdnistria, many citizens were unable to vote because these polling stations ran out of ballots, the statement says.

“I note that the legal framework is incomplete when it comes to the second round and it leaves too much room for interpretation,” said Geir Joergen Bekkevold (MP, Norway), Head of the OSCE PA delegation. “We stand ready to work hand in hand with our colleagues in the Moldovan Parliament to address these shortcomings and strengthen the electoral legislation and procedures.”

The 11-member OSCE PA delegation was supported by Programme Officers Farimah Daftary and Loic Poulain. It worked closely with the OSCE/ODIHR, PACE and the European Parliament.

## OSCE PA President Muttonen visits UN headquarters in New York

In a visit to United Nations headquarters in New York on 10-11 November, OSCE PA President Christine Muttonen (MP, Austria) highlighted the Assembly’s activities in a range of areas, including election observation, migration, gender, parliamentary diplomacy, mediation, and conflict prevention and resolution.

Meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, Muttonen described the OSCE’s role in observing last week’s US general elections, in which she led some 300 short-term OSCE observers. President Muttonen and Under-Secretary-General Feltman also exchanged views on the crisis in and around Ukraine as well as recent developments in Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Turkey.

Muttonen and Feltman also considered regional developments of shared relevance to the OSCE and the UN and explored avenues for enhanced co-operation including through the recently established post of UN Liaison for the



Christine Muttonen meets with Under-Secretary-General Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, New York, 11 Nov. 2016.

OSCE in Vienna.

The PA President also met with Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and a number of representatives of UN Member States, discussing a range of issues and possible avenues for collaboration. Muttonen extended an invitation to Under-Secretary-General Mlambo-Ngcuka to attend an OSCE PA event on women and security to be hosted by the Austrian Parliament in spring 2017.

## Third Committee Chair Sanchez Amor meets EU Commission Vice-President Timmermans

OSCE PA human rights committee Chair Ignacio Sanchez Amor (MP, Spain) met on Monday in Bratislava, Slovakia, with the Vice-President of the Commission of the European Union, Frans Timmermans, whose responsibilities include the rule of law and fundamental rights.

In the meeting, the sides discussed what could be done within both the OSCE and the EU to improve implementation

of human rights and rule of law commitments. Sanchez Amor and Timmermans explored ways to improve co-ordination among relevant OSCE and EU bodies on these issues.

The meeting took place on the occasion of a conference of parliamentary committees on European affairs of the EU Member States and within the framework of the Slovak Presidency of the European Union.