

Press Release

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Second round of the election of the Governor of Gagauzia: significant shortcomings urgently to be addressed

Chisinau, 18.12.2006 – Following the observation of the first round of the election of the Bashkan of Gagauzia, a delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe monitored the second round of the election held on 17 December.

The Congress delegation welcomed the fact that the election was conducted in a calm manner and was better organised than the first round. However, some irregularities noticed in a number of polling stations as well as the lack of impartiality and competence of the Central Electoral Commission of Gagauzia are issues that urgently need to be addressed.

The delegation observed less pressure and influence on commission members and voters. Yet, the secrecy of the vote continues to be seriously compromised by voting procedures and, in certain cases, pre-stamped ballots.

The supplementary voters' list, compiled on election day in accordance with Gagauzian electoral law, gives the Congress particular cause of concerns. The Delegation was surprised at the number of supplementary voters registering for the first time during the second round of the election.

The delegation welcomed the efforts made by the Gagauzian authorities to address critical issues noted during the first round, such as the requirement for requests in writing for mobile vote.

The Congress delegation is encouraged by the high turnout indicating continuing faith and support of the people for local democracy. It strongly encourages the new Bashkan and the Central Government to work constructively together for the benefits of both the region and the whole country.

The Congress will continue monitoring the developments of Moldovan local and regional democracy. It is convinced that the recommendations it will make following its observation of this election will certainly contribute to this aim and help the Moldovan authorities take further steps to comply with international electoral standards in particular in view of the forthcoming local elections.

Composition of the delegation

Mrs Susan Bolam, Northumberland County Councillor (UK, EPP, R) – **Head of delegation**

Mr Petru Radu Paun-Jura, Mayor of Simeria, Hunedoara County (Romania, ILDG, L)

Mr Paolo Rondelli, Municipal Councillor of San Marino, Member of the Congress (San Marino, SOC, R)

Accompanied by:

Ms Elena Piscopo, Congress Secretariat

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 315 full and 315 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities. President of the Congress Halvdan Skard (Norway, SOC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Yavuz Milden (EPP/CD, Turkey), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD). Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).