

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly Communication Unit

Ref: 128a07

Tel: +33 3 88 41 31 93

Fax :+33 3 90 21 41 34

pace.com@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



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## **PACE parliamentarians visit the United Kingdom to assess alleged electoral fraud**

Strasbourg, 23.02.2007 – Two members of the Monitoring Committee of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) will be traveling to Brighton and London 26 and 27 February 2007 to look into allegations of irregularities involving postal and absentee votes in the United Kingdom.

Former German Justice Minister Herta Däubler-Gmelin (SOC) and Polish Senator Urszula Gacek (EPP/CD) will after the visit report to the Monitoring Committee, which will then assess whether or not electoral fraud merits the opening of the Assembly's "monitoring procedure".

The two parliamentarians will visit Brighton, where a Conference of the Association of Electoral Administrators will be taking place, and London. Meetings are scheduled notably with MP's of the House of Commons, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Constitutional Affairs, and representatives of the Electoral Commission, the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Committee of Standards in Public Life, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Electoral Reform Society.

The visit is in response to a motion for a resolution signed by 18 members of the Assembly, which said there was "a growing body of evidence that widespread absent vote fraud is taking place in the United Kingdom" and pointing out that holding free elections is an obligation of all Council of Europe member states. The motion calls for the opening of a monitoring procedure, which involves ongoing dialogue with a member state on the fulfillment of its statutory obligations (democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights), as well as periodic plenary debates on progress made in honoring its Council of Europe commitments.

Ten of the Council of Europe's 46 member states – Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine – are currently subject to monitoring, which is obligatory for all states when they join the Organisation. A request to open a monitoring procedure for Italy, in connection with the media situation there, is also currently being evaluated.

[Motion for a resolution: application to initiate a monitoring procedure to investigate electoral fraud in the United Kingdom](#)

**Contact : Francesc Ferrer**, PACE Communication Unit,  
tel +33 3 88 41 32 50 ; mobile +33 6 30 49 68 22, francesc.ferrer@coe.int

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).