

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Local elections in Armenia show that local democracy needs further tangible consolidation

Yerevan, 29.09.2008 – Congress delegation, headed by Ms Véronique Moreira (France, NR), arrived in Yerevan on Wednesday last and conducted a number of key meetings with representatives of institutional bodies, political parties, NGOs and media.

Subsequently, observers deployed to all electoral districts in Yerevan and visited some 100 polling stations.

Council of Europe Congress observers, at yesterday's local elections in Yerevan, are worried that lack of transparency, and tensions at a number of locations overshadow the continuing development of local democracy in Armenia.

On the one hand, observers noted that low participation in areas where there was an election for the Community Council underscores low interest among voters in local government affairs.

On the other hand, in areas where there was a perceived high political stake, irregularities, frequently reported tensions in polling stations and disproportionately high turn-out in some instances give the impression that political democratic culture in Armenia need further buttressing.

Amidst reports conveyed to them of transporting voters from a locality to another and of bribery, they themselves observed a lack of transparency in both voting and counting procedures.

During the Autumn Session of Congress (December 2008) Mr Paolo Rondelli (San Marino, SOC), Rapporteur, will present all the findings of the mission.

The Congress encourages the Armenian authorities to take advantage of its recommendations, particularly with a view to the tangible consolidation of local democracy in the country.

Members of the delegation:

- Ms Véronique Moreira, Congress (France, NR) – Head of delegation
- Mr Paolo Rondelli, Congress (San Marino, SOC) – Rapporteur
- Mr Joe Conway, Congress (Ireland, ILDG)
- Mr Mihkel Juhkami, Congress (Estonia, EPP/CD)
- Mr Dobrica Milovanovic, Congress (Serbia, NR)
- Ms Dominique Ronga, Congress (France, SOC)
- Mr Uldis Rozenbergs, Congress (Latvia, EPP/CD)

Congress Secretariat

- Mrs Antonella Cagnolati, Director
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The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities. President of the Congress : Yavuz Milden (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, SOC), 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**).