

Press Release

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Republic of Moldova: declaration of the pre-electoral mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Strasbourg, 06.03.2009 – A pre-electoral delegation from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), visiting Chisinau on the eve of the parliamentary elections of 5 April 2009, has noted considerable pluralism in the political landscape of the country.

However, the delegation stresses that, despite the repeated recommendations of the Assembly and other bodies of the Council of Europe, a number of concerns continue to subsist during this electoral campaign.

More precisely, the pre-electoral delegation was informed of the following issues: use of administrative resources for the campaign, cases of pressure or intimidation, accuracy of voters' lists.

The delegation welcomes the pluralism of opinions in the print media but is preoccupied by the problem of equal access of all political parties to the broadcast media, particularly those TV channels with nationwide coverage.

The PACE pre-electoral delegation notes that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, in its October 2008 opinion, concluded that the revised Electoral Code of Moldova "provides a good basis for the organisation of genuinely democratic elections", while adding that some of its recommendations have not been reflected in the revised text.

The delegation considers that the parliamentary elections of 5 April 2009 will be a test of the maturity of democracy in Moldova, as its citizens will elect 101 members of the Parliament, which will then elect the new President of the country. It calls on the authorities of Moldova to eliminate the problems identified in electoral practice and to implement the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly contained in its Resolution 1572 (2007).

The delegation stresses that democratic elections are not limited only to voting day. The authorities of the country and all political actors have a huge responsibility to ensure the necessary conditions for the free expression of the will of all citizens of the Republic of Moldova.

The pre-electoral delegation has been assured by the authorities of Moldova, as well as by the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), that all measures will be taken to eradicate the problems identified in order to guarantee the democratic character of these parliamentary elections.

The pre-election delegation met Marian Lupu, the Speaker of the Parliament, Vitalie Pîrlog, the Justice Minister, the Chairman and members of the Central Election Commission (CEC), leaders of political parties participating in these elections, representatives of the mass media, civil society and the international community.

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The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Lluís Maria de Puig (Spain, SOC) – Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

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

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The Parliamentary Assembly will send a 20-member delegation to observe the parliamentary elections on 5 April 2009.

Members of the delegation: Andres Herkel (Estonia, EPP/CD), Head *ad interim* of the delegation, and Ioannis Baniias (Greece, UEL)

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