

Moldova's elections met many international standards, but further improvements are needed, observers say

Strasbourg, 6.04.2009 – Yesterday's parliamentary elections in Moldova met many international standards and commitments, but further improvements are required to ensure an electoral process free from undue administrative interference and to increase public confidence, the International Election Observation Mission said in a statement issued today.

The elections took place in an overall pluralistic environment, offering voters distinct political alternatives. The legal framework generally provided an adequate basis for the conduct of a democratic election, although important previous recommendations remain to be addressed.

Election day was well-organized and passed calmly and peacefully, with no major incidents reported. The voting and counting process was assessed positively by the observers, despite a number of significant procedural shortcomings.

The media provided contestants with opportunities to convey their messages, in particular through debates and paid airtime. The observers noted, however, that the state broadcaster blurred the distinction between the coverage of duties of state officials and their campaign activities.

The campaign environment was affected by frequent allegations of intimidation of voters and candidates, and claims of misuse of administrative resources. Some of these allegations were verified by the observers.

"I am delighted with the progress of democracy in Moldova. These elections were very good and they gave me great confidence in the future of this country," said Petros Efthymiou, head of the delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Special Co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers.

"The people of Moldova are to be congratulated on a relaxed, mainly well-run and democratic polling day. Now the new parliament needs to make the necessary improvements to Moldova's legal framework and electoral code," said David Wilshire, head of the delegation of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly.

"We noted real improvements in comparison with the 2005 parliamentary elections. However, further efforts must be made, in particular with regard to the position of the public broadcasting organization", said Marianne Mikko, head of the delegation of the European Parliament.

"Our overall assessment of this election is positive, but there is a need to inject more trust in the electoral environment, including through unbiased news reporting by the public broadcaster, improving voter registration procedures, and ensuring that contestants are treated equally by the authorities," said Nikolai Vulchanov, head of the long-term election observation mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

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Ref. 288a09