

## Moldova's parliamentary elections met many standards, but underscore need for democratic reform to restore trust

Chisinau, 30.07.2009 - Yesterday's parliamentary elections in Moldova met many international standards, but the process underscored the need for continued democratic reforms to restore public trust, the international election observation mission concluded in a preliminary statement issued today.

The election was overall well-administered, allowing for competition of political parties representing a plurality of views. The observers stressed that the campaign was negatively affected by subtle intimidation and media bias.

"I am encouraged by the conduct of these elections. Many OSCE commitments were met, but important challenges remain if the lack of trust among the country's political parties and voters is to be overcome so that Moldova's democracy can continue to improve," said Petros Efthymiou, head of the delegation Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and special co-ordinator of the OSCE short-term observers.

"I welcome the active participation of voters in this election, which is a good signal for democracy in Moldova. However, voters must feel confident with the entire election process. The inaccuracy of the voters lists has once again exposed weaknesses and an urgent need for major improvement. The voters of Moldova have expressed their will; it is now time for the country's political forces to demonstrate their ability for constructive political dialogue and power-sharing," said Mevlüt Cavusoglu, head of the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

"We cannot say, unfortunately, that these elections complied with all international criteria. However, the overall assessment of election day is positive. Yet, without structural democratic change, Moldova will not be able to meet its challenges. The way forward is not less but more democracy. On this road, the EU will be on the side of Moldova," said Marian-Jean Marinescu, head of the delegation of the European Parliament.

"It is encouraging that this election was run overall professionally and efficiently. But the deep-rooted mistrust among the contestants during the campaign underscores the pressing need for all parties to engage in a meaningful dialogue to overcome the blockade of the democratic process and tackle the manifold challenges Moldova is facing," said Ambassador Boris Frlec, Head of the election observation mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The observers noted that election day was well-organized and calm, and proceedings were generally assessed as positive. While the campaign took place in a highly polarized atmosphere, candidates were overall able to campaign across the country. The misuse of administrative resources, however, had a negative effect on the equality of campaign opportunities. Methods of subtle pressure and intimidation were used by the authorities to control the campaign environment.

The media offered voters information about key contestants, but the main TV channels failed to provide impartial and balanced coverage, favouring the ruling party both in terms of time and tone.

Election administration bodies operated transparently and overall in a professional manner. Despite some efforts to improve the quality of voter lists, voter registration lacked uniformity and observers identified shortcomings in the accuracy of voter lists on election day.

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