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## **Local elections in Serbia: Council of Europe Congress carries out a pre-electoral visit to Belgrade**

Strasbourg, 13 April 2012 - A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, headed by Nigel Mermagen, United Kingdom (ILDG), will carry out a pre-electoral mission to Serbia from 17 to 19 April 2012, in view of the upcoming local elections scheduled for 6 May 2012\*.

Briefings are planned, in particular, with: Predrag Grgić, Chairperson of the Republic Electoral Commission, representatives of the Ministry for Local Self-Government, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government as well as representatives of the diplomatic community and international organisations including OSCE/ODIHR.

In addition, the pre-electoral delegation will meet members of the Serbian delegation to the Congress and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities as well as representatives of civil society, NGOs and the media.

A larger Congress delegation – including members of the EU-Committee of the Regions – will be in the country from 2 to 7 May to observe the elections.

### **Members of the delegation:**

#### **Congress**

Gaye DOGANOGLU (Turkey, EPP/CD)

Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom, ILDG), Head of delegation

Väino HALLIKMÄGI (Estonia, ALDE), EU-Committee of the Regions

#### **Congress secretariat**

Renate ZIKMUND – Head of the Division of Communication and Election Observation

Jane DUTTON-EARLY – Assistant to the Congress Election Observation Monitoring Mission/Serbia

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\* Presidential and parliamentary elections will be held on the same day and observed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

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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: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC)

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).