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## **Council of Europe Congress to observe local elections in Serbia**

Strasbourg 27 April 2012 - A delegation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will observe the local elections in Serbia on 6 May 2012\*.

Briefings are planned in Belgrade on 3 and 4 May, in particular with representatives of the Republic Electoral Commission, members of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities as well as representatives of civil society, NGOs, the media and international organisations including OSCE/ODIHR.

Meetings have also been requested with representatives of the Ministry for Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, and the Mayor of Belgrade, Dragan Dilas, as well as with mayoral candidates in Belgrade.

On 5 and 6 May, the Congress delegation will be deployed to several cities including Nis, Presevo, Vranje, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad and Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica and Kanija to meet with elected representatives and candidates and to observe the vote on 6 May.

Nigel Mermagen (United Kingdom, ILDG) will head the delegation, which will also include two members of the European Union's Committee of the Regions as a part of the co-operation agreement between the two institutions.

A pre-election mission was carried out mid-April to assess the political situation, the campaign and the preparations for the vote, prior to these elections.

The Congress delegation will present its preliminary findings to the media on Monday 7 May 2012 in Belgrade (venue and time to be confirmed).

### **Members of the delegation**

#### Congress

Maria Teresa ARCINIEGA ARROYO, Spain (NR),  
Gaye DOGANOGLU, Turkey (EPP/CD)  
Henry FERAL, France (EPP/CD)  
György ILLES, Hungary (ILDG)  
Jüri LANDBERG, Estonia (ILDG)  
Nigel MERMAGEN, United Kingdom, (ILDG) Head of the delegation/Rapporteur.  
Valentina ROSSI, San Marino (SOC)  
Hannes WENINGER, Austria (SOC)  
Urs WÜTHRICH-PELLOLI, Switzerland (SOC)

#### EU committee of the regions

Uno SILBERG, Estonia (EA)  
Väino HALLIKMAGI, Estonia (ALDE)

#### 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

#### **Contacts on the spot:**

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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).