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Ref. 395(2011)

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

**Date:** 4 -10 May 2011

**Location:** Tirana, Durres, Elbasan, Himare, Shkoder, Vlore

A delegation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe will observe the local elections in Albania on 8 May 2011.

On 5, 6 and 7 May the delegation will hold meetings in Tirana, and in different regions, with representatives of government, the opposition, electoral bodies and political parties. Meetings are requested notably with Sali BERISHA, Prime Minister of Albania, Ferdinand PONI, Deputy Minister of the Interior and Edi RAMA, Mayor of Tirana, as well as Arben RISTANI, Chair of the Central Election Commission (CEC) and Jozefina TOPALLI, Speaker of the Parliament. The delegation will also exchange views with representatives of the diplomatic community, international organisations, including OSCE-ODIHR, NGOs and the media.

On 7 May, Congress delegations will be deployed to several cities including Durres, Elbasan, Himare, Shkoder, Vlore and Tirana to meet with elected representatives, candidates and NGOs and to observe the elections on 8 May.

Hana RICHTERMOCOVA, (Czech Republic, ILDG), will head the delegation, which will also include four members of the European Union's Committee of the Regions as a part of the co-operation agreement between the two institutions. Volkram GEBEL, (Germany, EPP/CD), will be the Rapporteur of the mission and Uno ALDEGREN, (Sweden, PES), will speak on behalf of the members of the Committee of the Regions.

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 at a joint press conference with the ODIHR delegation, scheduled for Tuesday 10 May, noon, Hotel Sheraton, Tirana (Sheshi Italia, Tirana).

### **Congress members**

Mamuka ABULADZE, (Georgia, EPP/CD)

Michel GUEGAN, (France, NR)

Mihkel JUHKAMI, (Estonia, EPP/CD)

Hannu KEMPPAINEN, (Finland, ILDG)

Amy KOOPMANSCHAP, (The Netherlands, SOC)

Vitalii OLUIKO, (Ukraine, SOC)

Petru Radu PAUN-JURA, (Romania, ILDG)

Volkram GEBEL (Germany, EPP/CD) - Rapporteur

Hana RICHTERMOCOVA, (Czech Republic, ILDG) - Head of delegation

Gilbert ROGER, (France, SOC)

### **Members of the Committee of the Regions**

Uno ALDEGREN, (Sweden, PES)

Patrick MCGOWAN, (Ireland, ALDE,)

Uno SILBERG, (Estonia, EA)

Teet KALLASVEE, (Estonia, EPP)

**Congress Secretariat**

Antonella CAGNOLATI, Director of the Congress

Giampaolo CORDIALE, Administrator, Congress

Pauline CADÉAC assistant to the observation of election mission

**Contact on the spot:**

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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-Paul 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).