

36th SESSION

Report
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Ad-hoc assessment mission Local elections in the Republic of Slovenia (18 November 2018)

Congress Bureau

Rapporteur:¹ Robert GRUMAN, Romania (R, EPP/CCE)

Summary

As part of its election observation, the Congress conducted an ad-hoc assessment of the local elections held on 18 November 2018 in Slovenia. The Head of the delegation and Chair of the Congress Governance Committee Robert GRUMAN was charged with reporting the preliminary conclusions of this visit to the Bureau.

In its mission report, the delegation points to the high level of trust of voters in Slovenia in the integrity of the electoral process and to the professional management of the polling in accordance with international standards. The report underlines the fact that national minorities enjoy high level protection of their rights, including the right to political participation and representation of minority interests at the level of local and national governments.

It also contains proposals for certain improvements in several areas including the sealing of ballot boxes, the identification of ballot boxes for different elections (Mayors, Local Councils), the counting, training of Election Board Members and the participation of women as candidates in local elections.

1 L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress
SOC: Socialist Group
ILDG: Independent and Liberal Democrat Group
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

I. Introduction

1. Following an invitation from Mr Rudi MEDVED, the Minister of Public Administration of Slovenia, received on 24 October 2018, the Bureau of the Congress decided, due to the budgetary situation and the current shortage of staff, in view of the first round of Local Elections in Slovenia of 18 November 2018, to deploy a limited Ad-hoc Mission in the frame of its electoral activities. Headed by the Chair of the Congress Governance Committee Robert GRUMAN, Romania (EPP-CCE, R), the delegation involved Ms Rosaleen O'GRADY, Ireland (ILDG, R), Ms Kateryna MARCHENKO, Ukraine (SOC, L), and two members of the Secretariat.

2. The Ad-hoc Mission was carried out from 16 to 18 November 2018. Prior to the Election Day, the Congress Delegation met with various interlocutors, including representatives of diplomatic missions and representatives of the Ministry of Public Administration, the State Election Commission (SEC) and several political parties. Additionally, the delegation held meetings with civil society organisations and the media as well as with representatives of recognised national minorities. On Election Day, two Congress teams were deployed to different municipalities in and around Ljubljana and in the east of the country. They visited some 30 polling stations.

The following Information Report focuses specifically on issues arising out of exchanges during meetings held with Congress interlocutors in the context of the 18 November 2018 Local Elections in Slovenia and on observations made on the Election Day. The Congress wishes to thank all of those who met with the delegation for their open and constructive dialogue.

II. Political Context

3. The Republic of Slovenia is a Parliamentary democracy with a bicameral Parliament, consisting of the National Assembly and the National Council. The executive power is vested in the Government which holds the confidence of the National Assembly. The Head of State is the President who is elected by popular vote every five years based on a majority system with a possible second round. Since 22 December 2012, Mr Borut PAHOR has been President of the Republic of Slovenia, re-elected in the Presidential election of 2017.

4. The National Assembly (*Državni zbor*) consists of 90 members, elected in general elections for a four-year term by proportional representation system. The most recent elections for members of the National Assembly were held on 3 June 2018 and resulted in formation of a new Government led by the Prime Minister Marjan ŠAREC. The Upper House of Parliament, the National Council (*Državni svet*), is a representative body for social, economic, professional and local interests. The National Council has 40 members elected for five years by the electoral colleges.²

5. The 2018 Early Parliamentary Elections were the third consecutive snap elections in the country. Elections were called after the resignation of the Prime Minister who resigned in reaction to the judgement of the Supreme Court which annulled the results of the 2017 referendum on the construction of a new railway connecting two major cities. These elections resulted in a minority Government formed by a broad coalition of smaller parties. While the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) won the elections, it failed to form the Government as other parties refused to go into a coalition with a populist partner.

6. The 2018 Local Elections were the first elections after the formation of the new Government. The pre-election period was clearly marked by the impacts of the Early Parliamentary Elections. Candidates representing all nine Parliamentary parties as well as several non-Parliamentary candidates ran for local mandates. There were numerous candidates running on independent local lists. While there was a clear trend on the right-wing spectrum that political parties were joining forces and supported common candidates, the situation was not so obvious on the left-side of the spectrum. By many political observers these elections were seen as an important step prior to the upcoming elections for the EU Parliament.

² The National Council consists of 22 representatives of local interests, six representatives of non-commercial activities, four representatives of employers, four of employees and four representatives of farmers, crafts, trades and independent professionals. The 22 representatives of local interests are elected by local communities. A maximum of 22 voting units, each covering one or more local communities, may be formed for the election of representatives of local interests.

7. The previous local elections held in 2014 were marked by low turnout when 45.23% of voters were reported to cast their ballots for the first round and only 42.5% in the second round run-off for Mayors. Interestingly, 115 out of 212 elected Mayors participated in the 2014 elections not as members of any political party but as independent candidates or with the support of groups of voters. This signals a strong anti-party sentiment on local level in the country.

III. Administrative structure of local governance

8. The Constitution of Slovenia guarantees the principle of local self-government. Slovenia has a single tier of local government composed of 212 Municipal Units (*občina*). This number includes 11 Urban Municipalities (*mestna občina*). There is also a structured Sub-Municipal Units level for citizen participation with approximately 1.200 Sub-Municipal communities, composed of 6.035 geographical settlements. Municipalities are the only bodies of local self-government. They are headed by a Mayor (*župan*) who is directly elected for a term of four years. The Municipal Council (*občinski svet*) is the Municipality's deliberative and decision-making body.

9. The Capital City of Slovenia is Ljubljana and it has constitutional recognition due to which the city fulfils multiple roles – as a City, a Capital City, and an Urban Municipality. Ljubljana is the largest city in Slovenia with a population of 287.000 or approximately 14% of the total population of the country.

10. Slovenia is characterised by a large number (more than 6.000) of smaller settlements, with 90 % of them having fewer than 500 inhabitants. Only seven towns have populations exceeding 20.000 inhabitants. Out of Slovenia's total population, 49.7% are urban residents demonstrating a rather high level of urbanisation of the country.

IV. Legal framework and electoral system

11. The Local Elections Act regulates elections for Municipal Councils, Mayors and Councils of Sub-Municipal Units, Villages and Urban Communities. The Act was last amended in December 2017. The amendment introduced that regular local elections are held on the same date (third Sunday of November) every four years. The fixed date applied for the first time to the 2018 Local Elections.

12. Under the Local Elections Act, Mayors are elected directly for a period of four years. The candidate who receives the absolute majority of votes cast is elected Mayor. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of votes, a second round is conducted two weeks later between the two candidates receiving the most votes. The first round of regular Mayoral elections takes place at the same time as regular Municipal Council elections. The second round was scheduled for 2 December.

13. Municipal Councils consist of 7 to 45 members depending on the size of the Municipality. The Local Elections Act provides two types of electoral systems for Municipal Councillors – the simple majority system and the proportional representation system. According to the first, candidates who receive the majority of votes are elected, whilst the latter envisages candidates' lists in electoral units. In this case, voters may only vote for one list of candidates and choose a candidate to whom they give preference in the election. If a Municipal Council has fewer than 12 members, Councillors are elected by simple majority of votes. Likewise, Councillors in Municipalities with mixed ethnicities are always elected by simple majority. Voters in the rest of Municipalities with 12 Councillors and more vote by proportional representation system.

14. The local election procedures have introduced a gender mainstreaming policy as well. The Local Elections Act states that each list of candidates must include at least 40% of candidates of the opposite gender, while places on the first half of the list shall be allocated alternately by gender. The 40% quota was for the first time fully implemented in the 2014 Local Elections. In 2014, there were 1,069 elected women Councillors (a share of 31.8%), compared to 730 women elected in 2010 (22% share).

V. Election administration

15. The election administration in Slovenia consists of three layers of election management bodies: the National Electoral Commission, Municipal Electoral Commissions and Election Boards. The December 2017 amendments to the Local Elections Act simplified the system by reducing the number of election

administration levels to three as a consequence of the protracted process and delays during the count in the 2014 Local Elections.

16. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) is a permanent body whose members are appointed every four years by the National Assembly. The NEC is composed of a President, a Vice-President, five members and their deputies. The President and the Vice-President are appointed from among the Supreme Court judges through an open and competitive recruitment process, two members and two deputies from among legal experts, and the remaining members on a proposal from the political parties represented in the National Assembly. Appointments take the proportional representation of political parties in the National Assembly into account. The NEC is responsible for the overall conduct of elections, coordinating the work of and providing instructions to lower-level election administration and declaring election results.

17. The Municipal Electoral Commissions (MEC) consist of a President and three members, and their deputies. The President and his/her deputy are nominated, if possible, from among judges or other graduate lawyers. The other members and their deputies are nominated on a proposal from the political parties, other residents' organisations and residents. The MEC members are appointed every four years by the Municipal Councils. The MECs have the following tasks: 1) ensure the legality of elections to the Municipal Council; 2) confirm individual candidacies or lists of candidates, and compile the candidates lists; 3) determine the polling stations; 4) appoint the Election Boards (EB); 5) determine the results of the voting and declare the members of the Municipal Council elected, and issue a report on the result of the elections; 6) conduct and directly run technical work relating to the elections. NEC and MECs are also responsible for assisting lower electoral bodies in their work and for providing the necessary information. If the mandate of NEC and MEC members should expire in the period following the calling of the election, their mandate shall be extended until the end of the elections.

18. On Election Day, voting in polling stations is run by the Election Boards (EB), the lowest layer of the electoral administration. According to the law, one EB shall be appointed for each polling station. EBs consist of a President and an even number of members, and their deputies. The President and members of EBs and their deputies shall be appointed from among residents who have permanent residence in the municipality. Political parties, other residents' organisations in the municipality and residents may submit their proposals for appointment as President and members of the Election Board and their deputies to the MEC no later than ten days after the calling of the election. EBs are tasked with running the vote and determining the result at the level of the polling station.

VI. Voter registration

19. All Slovenian citizens older than 18 years and present in the territory of State on Election Day have the right to vote at local level, unless their suffrage rights have been revoked by an individualised Court decision on the basis of mental disability. Citizens have the right to vote only in the municipality in which they have permanent residence. Out-of-country voting in local elections is not allowed.

20. Slovenia has a passive voter registration system based on permanent residence. Electoral registers are linked electronically to the civil register and the register of spatial units. According to the Voting Rights Register Act, the electoral registers are maintained by the Population Registration and Public Documents Division of the Ministry of Interior, and can be accessed and updated by the administrative units at the local level. The registers contain the voter's constituency, district, polling station and chosen method of voting.

21. Besides voting in regular elections, members of recognised national minorities have the right to vote also for their representatives in municipalities that have reserved seats in Municipal Councils. Inclusion in the voters' register for members of the Hungarian and Italian National Communities and the Roma Community is active in places of voters' permanent registration. To be eligible to vote for special national representatives, a voter must be considered a member of the respective national minority. Voters who were previously not included as well as voters who have reached voting age must make an individual request to the relevant self-governing body to be added to the register.³

³ Since 2014, the law has provided three eligibility criteria for the inclusion in this voter register: "*maintaining long-lasting, solid and on-going connections with their community, actively preserving the common identity that constitutes a particular community, including their culture or language, and being a relative up to a second-degree with a citizen who has already been granted the right to vote as a member of the Hungarian or Italian national community.*"

22. Residents who hold EU citizenship can vote for Municipal Councils and Mayors if they have a permanent residence in the municipality of voting. According to the December 2017 amendments, all third-country nationals who have a permanent residence permit in Slovenia and a registered permanent residence in the place of voting can also vote in Mayoral and Municipal elections. Voter registration of non-citizen residents is conducted ex officio on the basis of their registered address and the registration is thus automatic in the case of local elections.

23. The Local Elections Act provides various alternatives for voters in special circumstances. Early voting in special polling stations is available for voters who are absent on Election Day (they can cast the ballot 2-5 days ahead of the elections). Voters who are in the care of old people's homes and who do not have permanent residence in the home, and voters undergoing treatment in hospitals, may vote by post, provided that they report this to the MEC no later than seven days before the date of polling. Voters who, due to illness, are unable to vote in person at the polling station where they are inscribed on the voters' list may vote at home in the presence of a mobile Election Board, if they report this to the MEC no later than three days before the date of polling.

24. According to the NEC, a total number of 1.701.284 voters were included on the voters' lists for the first round of the 2018 Local Elections. For the second round, 612.747 voters were registered in municipalities where the run-off of Mayoral elections was held.⁴

VII. Candidate registration

25. All citizens of at least 18 years of age may run in the elections for Municipal Councils, Mayors and Councils of Districts, except those deprived of their candidacy rights by an individualized court decision. A candidate may only run in the constituency where he/she has permanent residence. EU citizens residing in Slovenia may stand for seats in Municipal Councils but cannot run for Mayor. Third-country nationals cannot run for any elected positions in local elections.

26. Candidates can run on the list of political parties, as independents or with the support of groups of voters. Candidates often run as independents or as member of independent lists. The December 2017 amendments to the Local Elections Act introduced new regulations on registration of candidates. For the Mayoral candidature, the potential candidate can be either promoted by a political party or needs the support (expressed by signatures) of at least 2 % of the number of voters in the respective municipality, that voted in the first round of the previous Mayoral elections (the number being limited to not less than 15 and not more than 2500 signatures). A similar system is in place for candidatures for Municipal Councils, with the signature numbers being smaller, amounting to 1 % of the number of voters in the respective municipality, who voted on the previous Municipal Council elections (the number being limited to minimum 15 signatures for both the majority and proportional system and maximum 1000 signatures for the proportional system).

27. In the 2018 Local Elections, there were 688 candidates (of whom 100 were women) registered to run for Mayoral Elections in the total of 212 Municipalities of Slovenia (including 11 Urban Municipalities). 87 candidates (among them 11 women) ran for Mayor in the 11 Urban Municipalities which means that seats in larger municipalities were more competed and women candidates were represented even less than for seats in smaller municipalities. 36 of the candidates for Mayors faced no opponents in their municipalities and were thus certain to retain their mandates. In the elections for Municipal Councils, 21.802 candidates registered to run for seats (of which 4.435 in the 11 Urban Municipalities). 12.681 candidates in total were registered in elections for Councils of Districts, Villages and Urban Communities.

VIII. Election campaign and campaign finance

28. The election campaign is regulated by the Elections and Referendum Campaign Act. The official 30 days long campaign period for local elections began on 19 October and ended on 16 November. This was followed by 24 hours of campaign silence that lasted until the closure of the polling stations. The election silence applies to the premises and vicinity of polling stations as well as generally to the media and political events.

⁴ https://volitve.gov.si/lv2018/udelezba/obcine_naziv.html

29. As regards campaign finance, the law provides that campaign organisers have to open up special bank accounts, which must be used to cover all campaigning costs. Permitted campaign spending is 0.4 Euros per eligible voter for the election of Local Councillors, 0.25 Euros per eligible voter for a Mayoral election and an additional 0.15 Euros for the second round of elections.

30. Although the campaign took place relatively shortly after the Early Parliamentary Elections, the main topics remained rather local and comprised issues such as tourism, EU funding of municipal projects and local employment. In more populated municipalities, the local elections were to some extent perceived as a “test” about the new Government. During the campaign, which was largely decentralised involving low-key activities, mainly issues specific to the different municipalities were addressed.

31. The overall campaign atmosphere was rather calm and no significant concerns were expressed by representatives of political parties and candidates concerning the level playing field for the competitors.

IX. Media

32. The media landscape in Slovenia is pluralistic. Television is the main source of information, with a large portion of viewers watching it online. The legislation provides a sound framework for freedom of the media. The freedoms of expression and of the press are protected by the Constitution, which also establishes the right to access public information. Other laws governing the media are the 2001 Mass Media Act, the 2003 Access to Information Act, the 2011 Act on Audio-visual Media Services, the 2005 Radio and Television Corporation of Slovenia Act and the Law on Elections to the National Assembly.⁵

33. The use of inflammatory language is regulated under the Criminal Code. The law establishes that public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance is punishable with imprisonment for up to two years if formulated in a manner that implies incitement to public disorder, the use of force or dissemination of ideas on the supremacy of one race over another.

34. The Elections and Referendum Campaign Act specifies that public media shall ensure balance and impartiality by providing equal conditions to all contestants. All political advertising shall disclose who ordered it.

X. National minorities

35. Italian, Hungarian and Roma national minorities are recognised by the State. While the Italian and Hungarian National Communities have their status and rights enshrined in the Constitution (Article 64), the rights of Roma Community (sic) are foreseen in the Constitution (Article 65) but regulated by law.⁶ These national minorities enjoy high level protection of their rights, including the right to political participation and representation of minority interests at the level of local and national governments. In municipalities where members of national minorities are concentrated, a number of seats are reserved for their representatives in Municipal Councils. Representatives of all three national minorities were met by the Congress Delegation and expressed their general contentment with the institutional set-up of their minority rights protection for local elections.⁷

36. The Roma Community is dispersed across the country and numerically larger than the two other groups which are concentrated in certain regions. The Roma minority has special participation rights in local government, but not at the national level as it is the case for the Italian and the Hungarian minority. Traditionally, participation by members of the Roma Community in elections is rather low, with regional variations. Some interlocutors of the Congress expressed that in municipalities where members of the Roma Community have reserved seats in the Municipal Council, there are not always enough candidates to run for these seats. In some municipalities, Roma Community has no reserved seats despite being represented in the population of the municipality.

⁵ The provisions of the Law on Elections to the National Assembly apply mutatis mutandis to questions not specially governed by the Local Elections Act.

⁶ The Roma Community in the Republic of Slovenia Act

⁷ There is however an on-going debate in Slovenia about the protection of rights of other national minorities which do not enjoy the State recognition. This concerns mainly the nationals of the former Yugoslavia (who outnumber the recognised national minorities) and a small German speaking community. These minorities are not officially recognised by the State and their rights enjoy no special protection.

XI. Election Day

37. On a calm and uneventful Election Day, two Congress teams visited some 30 polling stations in and around the Capital Ljubljana and in the east of the country that were, overall, professionally managed by the electoral staff. Voters were able to express their will in full accordance with international standards.

38. Congress teams met no domestic or political party observers on Election Day, even though presence of observers in polling stations is allowed by law. This can be explained by high level trust in the integrity of electoral process which the Congress teams noted among interlocutors and observed throughout the Election Day.

39. The closing and counting procedures were observed in two selected polling stations where no shortcomings were observed. The Election Board members were well aware of their tasks and carried out all procedures in an orderly and efficient manner.

40. The turnout for the first round of local elections was 51.18%, which is about 6% higher than at the previous local elections. The first round of elections resulted in rather expected victories of many incumbent Mayors in biggest cities who either won in the first round or advanced to the second round from the first place.⁸ As for political parties, the oppositional SDS and the junior Government party SD in overall succeeded while the largest coalition party LMS failed to gain grounds on the local level.

41. Most importantly, independent candidates became a clear winner of the first round in terms of seats of Mayors (87 gained for 287 running candidates). In Municipal Councils, 944 of the 3.400 seats were secured by independents, which make 32.4% of the national vote. This is a continuation of long trend marking strong support for independent candidates on local level. All in all, 157 of the 212 Slovenian Municipalities elected their Mayors in the first round.

42. In the spotlight was the race over the Mayor of Ljubljana in which the incumbent Zoran Jankovič (on an independent list) predictably won re-election against a SDS candidate. Jankovič even increased his share of the vote slightly from four years ago, to 61%, and his list regained outright majority in city council.

43. For the second round of Mayoral Elections, the turnout was 49.15% in the remaining 55 municipalities where no candidate won in the first round. Unlike the first round, performance of many incumbents was not as strong. For example, the incumbent Mayor of Koper lost his mandate in a close race (50.01% for the winning candidate)⁹. The detailed results of the first and second round of the 2018 local elections are available on the SEC website.¹⁰

XII. Conclusions

44. While overall the vote was evaluated positively, the Congress Delegation noted that there is room for certain improvements in several areas:

Sealing of ballot boxes: In order to enhance consistency in the application of the rules, the sealing of ballot boxes should be conducted in a unified manner so that all ballot boxes are sealed properly and by identical seals and the seal numbers are systematically noted down in the record book.

⁸ With the notable exception of Maribor where standing Mayor lost in the first round.

⁹ Another close race took place in the Municipality of Šmarješke Toplice where the Congress Delegation, following the information by Ms Bernardka KRNC, the Head of the Delegation of Slovenia to the Congress, visited the Municipality prior to the E-Day and met different interlocutors. The Delegation heard complaints about a highly competed election campaign for Mayor between a long-standing incumbent and her contender. The second round of the Mayoral Election resulted in a narrow win of the Mayor-elect. This led to an appeal calling for repeated elections in one polling station where an allegedly incapacitated voter had cast a vote. Although this call was initially accepted by the MEC, a higher authority court decided (after a recount and a re-examination of the contested ballot) that there were no grounds for rerun elections. The Congress Delegation concluded that this was a very specific case and therefore cannot be deemed as a systemic issue.

¹⁰ Source: State Election Commission of Slovenia, Lokalne volitve 2018, available at: https://volitve.gov.si/v2018/udelezba/obcine_naziv.html.

Voting: It could also be useful to better identify the ballot boxes for the different elections (Mayoral, Local Council, etc.) in order to make it easier for the voters to distinguish between them. In addition, better recognisable colours of the different ballot papers could facilitate the vote.

Counting: The electoral administration should consider providing Election Board Members with transportation from the polling stations to the MECs after the counting whereby the integrity of counted ballots would be strengthened and logistical problems for the EBs avoided.

Training: Comprehensive training for all members of the EBs should be made available and written instructions are no substitute for qualitative training carried out by specialised staff.

Inclusion: While the involvement of members of national minorities in municipal decision-making processes can be described as exemplary in Slovenia, the participation of women as candidates in local elections can still be improved.

APPENDIX I

DELEGATION

Congress members

Mr Robert GRUMAN, Romania (EPP-CCE, R), Congress Vice-President and Chair of the Governance Committee

Ms Kateryna MARCHENKO, Ukraine (SOC, L)

Ms Rosaleen O'GRADY, Ireland (ILDG, R)

Congress Secretariat

Ms Renate ZIKMUND, Head of Service a.i., Department of Statutory Activities,
Local and Regional Election Observation

Mr Adam DRNOVSKY, Election Observation Officer

APPENDIX II

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 15 November 2018

Various times **Arrival of the Congress Delegation in Ljubljana**

Friday, 16 November 2018

- 08:15 – 08:45 Breakfast briefing for the Delegation
Venue: Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana
- 09:00 – 09:45 Meeting with representatives of Permanent Representations in Ljubljana
- **Mr Norbert HACK**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Austria
 - **Mr Jan BENEŠ**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Czech Republic
 - **Mr Arthur HENDRICK**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ireland
- Venue: Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana*
- 10:00 – 11:00 Meeting with representatives of the State Election Commission of the Republic of Slovenia
Venue: State Election Commission, Slovenska 54, Ljubljana
- 11:15 – 12:00 Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Public Administration, Republic of Slovenia,
Mr Leon BEHIN
Venue: Ministry of Public Administration, Tržaška 21, Ljubljana, 7th floor
- Lunch break*
- 13:00 – 13:45 Meeting with representatives of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, the Roma community
- **Mr Stanko BALUH**, Director of the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities
 - **Ms Linda ROTTER**, Vice president of the Coastal community
 - **Mr Andrea BARTOLE**, Secretary of the Coastal community
 - **Mr Darko RUDAŠ**, representative of the Roma Minority
 - **Mr Tomislav LEBAR**, representative of the Hungarian community
- Venue: Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for National Minorities, Gregorčičeva 27, Ljubljana*
- 14:00 – 14:25 Briefing with representatives from SDS (Slovenian Democratic Party), **Mr MEŽAN** and **Mr ZADERGAL**
Venue: Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana
- 14:35 – 15:00 Briefing with representatives from LMS (List of Marjana Sarca), **Mr Branko KRALJ**, Secretary General
Venue: Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana
- 15:10 – 16.10 Meeting with representatives of NGOs
- **Mr Vid TOMIČ**, Transparency Int.
 - **Mr Goran FORBICI**, Center Nevladnih Organizacij Slovenije
- Venue: Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana*
- 16:20 – 16:45 Briefing with representatives from LEVICA (The Left), **Mr Simon MALJEVAC**, Secretary General

Venue: *Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana*

17:00 – 18:00 Meeting with representatives from the media
Venue: *Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana*

Saturday, 17 November 2018

08:00 Departure from the *Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana*

09:00 Arrival in Smarjeske Toplice

09:00 – 10:30 Meetings with the Mayor of Smarjeske Toplice and President of the Slovenian Delegation to the Congress, **Ms Bernardka KRNC**, the President of the Municipal Electoral Commission, **Mr Fredi BANCOV**, and the Deputy President **Ms Marinka UDOVIC**

10:30 Departure from Smarjeske Toplice

11:45 Arrival in Kocevje

12:00 – 13:30 Working lunch with the Mayor of Kocevje and Member of Congress, **Mr Vladimir PREBILIC**

13:30 Departure from Kocevje

15:30 Arrival in Izola

15:45 – 17:45 Meetings with **Ms Breda PECAN**, former Vice-President of the Congress, representatives of the Municipality of Izola and the electoral administration as well as representatives of the Italian national community in Slovenia

18:00 Departure from Izola to Ljubljana

19:00 Arrival at the Hotel Emonec, Ljubljana

Sunday, 18 November 2018 – Election Day

07:00 – 19:00 Visit of randomly selected polling stations in Ljubljana and adjacent municipalities (2 Congress observer teams)

21.00 Debriefing in the Hotel *Emonec, Ljubljana*

Monday, 19 November 2018

Various times **Departure of the Congress Delegation**