

Press Release



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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The elections to the Supreme Council of Adjara show sporadic progress

Tbilisi, 04.11.2008 – "Polling day was calm and several recommendations by the Congress following the 2001 and 2004 Adjara elections have now been followed. However, reported irregularities show that a further consolidation of the democratic processes is necessary." Günther Krug (Germany), Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Head of the Congress' observer delegation, said in a statement following the elections on 3 November.

The delegation appreciated the fact that polling day was orderly and conducted in a positive atmosphere. At the same time, the Congress delegation concluded that certain election procedures will need reassessment. There were reports of inadequacies regarding the voter lists, and the vote count and transmission of results often proved difficult. This issue needs to be assessed in greater detail when more complete information is available.

The ballot papers for the majority and proportional elections were very similar and in future could be distinguished by different colours. Other matters to be considered are that surveillance cameras were installed in some polling stations but not in others and that the ink marking of voters did not function well enough.

The delegation noted that some parties abstained altogether from participating in the elections. It also expressed doubts about whether the reduction of seats in the new Supreme Council from 30 to 18 can enhance regional democracy, which should remain a goal. Similar doubts were expressed about the fact that the Council does not have the right to elect directly the Head of Adjara Government.

The delegation arrived in Georgia on Friday 31 October and held a large number of meetings in Tbilisi and Batumi with representatives of the international community, the Supreme Council of Adjara, government bodies, NGOs and political parties.

On 3 November, the delegation was in the following areas of Adjara to observe the voting and ballot counting: Batumi, Kobuleti, Khelvachauri and Khulo.

Members of the delegation:

Günther Krug, Vice-President, Member of the House of Representatives of Berlin (Germany, SOC, R) – **Head of the delegation and Rapporteur**
Christopher Newbury, Councillor, Wiltshire County Council (United Kingdom, EPP/CD, L)
Gintautas Geguzinskas, Mayor of Pasvalys District (Lithuania, EPP/CD, R)
Sari Ylipulli, Member of Rovaniemi City Council (Finland, NR, R)
Jüri Landberg, Mayor of Rägavere Municipality (Estonia, ILDG, R)
Hana Richtermocova, Deputy Mayor, City of Horice (Czech Republic NR, L)

Congress Secretariat:

Fredrik Holm, Head of the Co-ordination and Management Division of the Congress, Co-ordination of election observation
Martine Schandené, Congress Secretariat

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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 : Yavuz Mildon (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities : Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD). Political Groups : Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).

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