



COUNCIL OF EUROPE    CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Council of Europe / Conseil de l'

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**A - SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

**B - REPORT**

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**-THE DELEGATION'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDA**

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## A – SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

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**B – REPORT**

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The President's wife - was also \$ ) \* & \$  
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whom she had voted. ( We note that this also  
interpretation of the notion "secret ballot"

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Another use of state resources for the benefit of the students of Chisinau".

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The observers used the questionnaire drawn Democratic Elections entitled "Guidelines for

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The mission's main conclusions with respect

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Their presence was high up in the field in the "the  
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Citizens not enrolled on the electoral register  
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delegation's programme appears in Annex II.

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The main efforts of the country's political

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**THE DELEGATION'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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C – ANNEXES

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Annex II: Timetable of the delegation's meetings

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LOCAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE  
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

25 May 2003

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Wednesday, 21 May 2003

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**Tuesday, 27 May** **Departure of the delegation**



8 JUNE 2003

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## **Council of Europe's Congress to observe local elections in Moldova during Moldovan Presidency of the Organisation**

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Strasbourg, 29.04.2003 - The Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) has decided to observe the local elections which will take place in Moldova on 25 May 2003, following an invitation from the relevant authorities in the country.

The Congress delegation of twelve observers will be led by Yavuz Mildon, Vice-President of the CLRAE. In preparation for its Moldovan mission, the delegation is in constant contact with the OSCE Mission based in Chisinau, and the ODHIR observers who are already in place.

Following the latest information on the subject of judicial harassment directed towards certain candidates, the President of the Congress, Herwig van Staa, has asked the delegation to pay particularly close attention to the future development of the electoral campaign.

The elections, which will take place at the level of first and second tier local authorities, are intended to implement reforms aimed at replacing the ten existing regions (judets) with thirty-two districts (raioane) based on historical boundaries.

Local public administration legislation has recently been revised, in order to better respond to concerns expressed within the Council of Europe, including strong criticism by the Congress of this reform in its Recommendation 110 (2002). The Congress therefore considers these local elections as a test case for the implementation of the revised legislation.

For further information:

<http://press.coe.int/press2/press.asp?B=0,0,0,0,0&M=http://www.coe.fr/cplre/indexe.htm>

### **Press Contact**

Council of Europe Spokesperson and Press Division

Tel. +33 3 88 41 25 60 - Fax. +33 3 88 41 39 11

E-mail: [PressUnit@coe.int](mailto:PressUnit@coe.int)

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**SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION FORMS (1<sup>st</sup> round)**

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- o The atmosphere in the polling stations with the exception of three where it was described as "not serious".
- o General assessment of the polling stations: four were considered "quite bad" or "bad".
- o The count was considered "very good" or "good".

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## **Despite smooth voting, conduct of local elections in Moldova raises concerns**

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CHISINAU, 26.05.2003 - Although voting during the 25 May local elections in Moldova was well-administered and generally in line with international standards, notable shortcomings observed during the campaign are a source of concern, concluded the international observation missions deployed by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE).

"Though there is still room for improvement, the overall legislative framework and the professionalism of the election officials are a good foundation for future elections in Moldova," said Ambassador Michael Wygant, the head of the ODIHR observation mission. "However, the campaign period raised concerns regarding the integrity of the elections and may have damaged public confidence in the electoral process."

"In general, voting and counting went well yesterday, but there were problems with the secrecy of the vote", added Yavuz Mildon, the head of the CLRAE delegation.

The international observers expressed disappointment with several aspects of the campaign, such as the arrest and intimidation of opposition candidates; incomplete separation of party and government, including reports of the misuse of public resources for campaign purposes; and a clear bias in favour of the authorities on state television. Independent analysts and candidates expressed lack of confidence in the impartiality of certain governmental institutions and the judiciary.

Regarding future elections, beginning with the 8 June runoffs, the international election observation missions urge the authorities to reverse the negative trends that became evident during the campaign. The ODIHR and the CLRAE will consider extending their observation for the second round.

The OSCE/ODIHR and the CLRAE will publish comprehensive reports approximately one month after the completion of the election process.

**For further information, please contact:**

- Curtis Budden, ODIHR Officer, P48609i502 266 fairs Of
  - Riccardo Priore, CLRAE, Head of the Institutional
- Mobile +33 6 07 03 06 15

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## Observers express concerns about runoff local elections in Moldova, despite slight improvement over first round

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CHISINAU, 9 June 2003 – Although yesterday's second round of local elections showed a slight improvement over the first round held on 25 May, and voting was conducted mostly in line with international standards, shortcomings observed during the campaign remain a source of concern, concluded the international observation missions of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE).

"Balloting proceeded smoothly, and a decrease in tension during the campaign was again marred by media bias, misuse of administrative resources, and aggressive rhetoric, notably in the mayoral runoffs in Chisinau," said Robert Newbury, the head of the ODIHR observation mission.

"As in the first round, problems were observed regarding the conduct of the elections," said Robert Newbury, the head of the CLRAE delegation. "In some instances, voters were present inside polling stations as a matter of course."

The state media, despite some improvement over the first round, again showed a clear bias in favour of state authorities and the ruling party. In the key runoff election for the mayor of the capital Chisinau, state television continued its negative campaign against the incumbent, although he was finally permitted to make a rebuttal. At the same time, the media was clearly biased in support of the incumbent's re-election bid.

Observers expressed particular concern about freedom of the media. Specifically, questions were raised concerning the timing of, and reasons for, the dismissal of the head of the News Department of the Moldovan-owned news agency.

The international observers noted that complaints and appeals arising from the first round were adjudicated on a timely basis and that, in general, the election administration performed its duties in a professional manner.

### For further information, please contact:

- Curtis Budden, ODIHR, Public Affairs Officer, + 48 22 520 0600, +48 609 522 266  
- Mats Lindberg, Secretariat of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, +33 3 90 21 44 75, +33 6 70 16 28 50

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