

ELECTION OBSERVATION AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL



Twenty years of experience
in electoral matters

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
of the Council of Europe

The Congress

Le Congrès

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Observing Local and Regional Elections

Twenty years of the Congress' experience

Over the last twenty years, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, in co-operation with its strategic partners, has been systematically involved in the observation of local and regional elections in Council of Europe member States. This brochure summarises major achievements and continued challenges in this field of Congress' action.

Layout: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
Print: Council of Europe
Edition: January 2020

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Observing local and regional elections

The Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities are the two political assemblies of the Council of Europe, mandated by the Committee of the Ministers to observe elections in their respective fields¹.

As guardian of local and regional democracy, the Congress was granted the observation of elections at grassroots' level.

Together with the monitoring of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, it is part of the Congress' institutional responsibility to evaluate the situation of local and regional democracy in Europe. Election observation has become widely accepted as a key barometer of the democratic development of a country and as an instrument in support of better electoral processes.

Based on its specific mandate, the Congress organised some hundred missions from 2001 on – mainly in Council of Europe member States and occasionally beyond – such as in the Palestinian territories in 2008 and in Tunisia in 2018.

On an average, the Congress is able to finance three to five missions per year. The Congress organised four election observation missions in 2017 – in Finland, Armenia, Georgia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, six election observation missions in 2018 – in The Netherlands, in the Republic of Moldova, in Tunisia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Poland and in Slovenia and three election observation missions in 2019 – two in Turkey and one in the Republic of Moldova. The scope of Congress' missions depends very much on the political context of the respective vote

¹ More information on the complete range of Council of Europe's activities in the sphere of elections can be found in the Information document [GR-DEM\(2019\)8](#) prepared by the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) of the Committee of Ministers and dated 17 September 2015.

and the interest expressed by a State in the deployment of a Congress' delegation.

Developing a specific methodology

In the last twenty years, the Congress' methodology in observing elections at local and regional level has been refined in order to meet the highest standards. In 2010, the Congress made a major step forward in terms of systematisation of its electoral activities and adopted a proper election observation strategy in its Resolution 306. Through Resolution 353, adopted in 2013, the way was paved towards a more systematic follow-up to the recommendations. In October 2015, the revised Congress rules and procedures brought into focus targeted activities in the framework of the post-electoral dialogue.

The progressive structuring of election observation through Congress' reference texts went together with a better practical organisation of its missions in the field. In particular, over the last ten years, significant progress has been achieved by the Congress: it refined its methodology through systematic political and legal briefings for the Congress' observers and the continued incorporation of international standards; it increased co-operation with strategic partners, notably the Council of Europe Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR and it professionalised the whole observation process through collaboration with academics and electoral experts who are supporting the rapporteurs of the Congress with the drafting of the reports and recommendations further to an election observation mission.

Professionalising Congress' observers

One of the major features of the Congress' methodology is that observers are local or regional elected representatives from the 47 member States of the Council of Europe. Many of them have been involved in the practical organisation of elections in their own municipality or region. Thus election

observation at international level is a possibility for them to share experiences and compare the different systems in use in Europe. Back in their home country, the discussions with local and regional stakeholders and the information collected on the spot are a source of inspiration for the members of the Congress. This is a win-win-situation for both the observer and the country in which elections are being held, an opportunity to look beyond one's own nose and a chance to learn from each other.

In order to ensure election observation based on common democratic standards, the Congress has established a set of rules for the composition of its delegations which include a balanced representation of the different political groups, a fair geographical representation and gender balance. Moreover, the Congress is striving for a balanced participation of members of both the Local Chamber and the Chamber of the Regions. In their regular setting, delegations are composed of five up to 20 Congress' members, members of the secretariat and an expert.

Access to up-dated country files, practical information and regular training are major tools of the Congress to improve the performance of its observers in the field. Particular emphasis is being placed on ethics while observing, in particular in respect of impartiality, conflict of interest and non-acceptance of inappropriate gifts or invitations. A Congress' Guide on observation of local and regional elections contains a list of "dos and don'ts" for observers. Thorough preparation prior to a mission, and systematic feedback after a mission at post-electoral briefings and through forms, are preconditions of successful observation of elections and constitute the basis of high-quality reports and meaningful recommendations to member States.

Cooperating with major stakeholders in the field

As it is the case for many other activities, the Congress is working in complementary and good collaboration with other key actors in the electoral field, notably the Parliamentary Assembly and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, the EU Committee of the Regions and OSCE/ODIHR. Maintaining and reinforcing co-operation with its partners by sharing expertise, best practices and field experiences is high on the agenda of the Congress.

The enlarged mission to observe the local elections in Ukraine on 25 October 2015 is a concrete example of such co-operation. For the first time, 11 members of the Parliamentary Assembly joined the Congress' delegation, together with members of the EU Committee of the Regions – making it the largest ever observer delegation organised by the Congress involving 57 observers from 25 countries.

The Joint Opinion on the Congress' Checklist for compliance with international standards and good practices preventing misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes at local and regional level prepared by the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR and adopted in March 2017 is another example of the co-operation between the Congress and its strategic partners.

The Council for Democratic Elections

A concrete sign of the recognition of the efforts of the Congress to further fine-tune its electoral activities was the election of the Dutch member of Congress, Jos Wienen, as Chair of the Council for Democratic Elections in March 2015. Active contribution to the Council, one of the well-established European interfaces in electoral matters, enables the Congress to foster co-operation, exchange of know-how between strategic partners and tackle transversal problems and new challenges.

Reports and recommendations adopted by the Congress systematically refer to the common standards developed in the framework of the Council for Democratic Elections thus contributing to the coherence of the Council of Europe activities in electoral matters.

Substantial achievements in the last twenty years

The reports prepared by the Congress in the last years show that many member States have made considerable progress to ensure free and fair electoral processes. The professionalisation of the electoral administration and the drafting of electoral laws in line with international standards are major achievements. However, there is still room for improvement in respect of key elements of the process, notably the further depoliticisation of the administration and the elimination of inconsistencies in the legislation.

Also, media freedom is a key condition of fair and free elections. During many missions, the Congress has observed that the role of media to inform citizens is being challenged by oligarch structures and insufficient legislation on transparency of media ownership. This is a threat to independent journalism and deprives voters of their right to make an informed choice based, not least, on unbiased media content.

Criteria to stand in elections and, in particular, the possibility for independent candidates to compete in electoral processes are also crucial. At local level, this entails a fair representation of communities and should allow candidates to run in elections without the political and financial support of the political establishment. Despite the fact that the legislation has been improved in many countries through the introduction of quota regulations, the concrete political participation of women still remains a matter of concern.

The question of financing of electoral campaigns and political parties is one of the key issues covered by the Venice Commission through the Code of Good Practice in the field of Political Parties. However, the implementation

of standards on financial reporting is in many countries still very poor. It also intersects with other issues such as the misuse of administrative resources in electoral processes.

Addressing recurring transversal issues

In addition to the country-specific observations and election reports, the Congress developed a strategy to better address problems which are of broader relevance. Such recurring transversal issues include, in particular:

- the accuracy and quality of voters' lists;
- the professionalisation and depoliticisation of the electoral administration at all levels;
- the situation of independent candidates;
- voting rights at local level of internally displaced people and migrants;
- the misuse of administrative resources during electoral campaigns.

Issues related to changes of electoral borders and the phenomenon of so-called "gerrymandering" in the context of administrative-territorial reforms also constitute a relatively new development in the field of elections.

Misuse of administrative resources

In early 2016, the Venice Commission adopted the Joint Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes. This issue has been increasingly discussed during election observations and remains very complex. It is of high importance at local and regional level because of the closeness of such resources to potential beneficiaries in municipalities and regions. It is, of course, also linked to the fight against corruption and the ability of voters to make informed choices.

Therefore, the Congress prepared a report on the misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes and the role of local and regional elected representatives and public officials. The related Resolution was adopted in October 2016 and constituted, at the same time, a contribution to the Congress' priority theme – "Ethics and transparency at local and regional level" ([CG31\(2016\)07](#)).

Moreover, in order to provide for concrete guidance with regard to the implementation of standards related to the misuse of administrative resources at grassroots' level, the Congress prepared a new "Checklist for compliance with international standards and good practices preventing misuse of administrative resources during electoral processes at local and regional level", adopted in March 2017 ([CG32\(2017\)12](#)).

In April 2018, the Checklist was published in the format of a "Practical Guide" for local and regional politicians and public officials to better understand the misuse of administrative resources in elections. The Guide contains a number of practical examples of such unfair behaviour and it explains why this problem must be taken seriously by the member states of the Council of Europe, especially at the grassroots level.

Accuracy and quality of voters' lists

The recurring issue of quality of voters' lists has been dealt with by the Congress in form of a transversal report adopted at the 28th Congress Session in March 2015. Also in this case, concrete experiences during observation missions have made us aware of potential electoral fraud related to voters who remain on electoral lists although residing – de facto – abroad. From Congress' perspective, a genuine link between a voter and the municipality in which he (or she) casts the ballot at local level is crucial.

The Congress is aware that the historical and cultural context makes it sometimes difficult for countries to subscribe to the idea of removing citizens who do not permanently live in a specific municipality from the voters' lists. However, it is our conviction that local questions should be decided by the electorate actually residing in a specific municipality. The

Congress is committed to raise this issue with all its interlocutors in order to achieve progress in this respect – and did it, for example, during the Fact-finding Mission in Albania in February 2016 ([CG/2015\(28\)6](#)).

Voting rights at local level of internally displaced people and migrants

In the context of continuing flows of migration in the area of the Council of Europe for political, humanitarian and socio-economic reasons, an increasing number of people have settled or have been re-settled in countries or regions other than their country or region of origin. Since voting encourages migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to actively participate in the life of their community, voting rights, at the local level, may be seen as a natural starting point for successful long-term integration.

In view of future election observation missions, the Congress prepared a report examining the international standards with regard to voting rights of IDPs and non-citizens, outlining the major challenges to the implementation of such rights and describing the diversity of approaches chosen by Council of Europe member states in this respect. The report was presented at the 35th Plenary Session of the Congress in November 2018 and Recommendation 419 (2019) and Resolution 431 (2019) on “Voting rights at local level as an element of successful long-term integration of migrants and IDPs in Europe’s municipalities and regions” were adopted on this occasion ([CG35\(2018\)17](#)).

Follow-up to Congress Recommendations

The Congress attaches great attention to the follow-up of its election observation missions and to the implementation of recommendations emerging from such observations. As a consequence, and in complementarity to the political monitoring process of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, it has introduced a procedure to open a post-electoral dialogue. In co-operation with State authorities, political forces, national associations of local and regional self-government and other relevant stakeholders, it highlights specific issues detected during election observations and offers support to work on suitable solutions. This is also ensured by the participation of the Congress in post-electoral conferences organised by the Directorate General of Democracy and by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

During the Fact-finding Mission carried out early 2016 in Albania, the Congress, for the first time, engaged in such a post-electoral dialogue, further to the local elections held in June 2015.

Further to the observation of the October 2016 local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a fact-finding mission to Sarajevo and Mostar organised in June 2017, a Congress "Reflection Group on Mostar" was created with the aim to contribute to a sustainable solution restoring local democracy in this city where since 2008 no local elections have been held due to political deadlock. Bringing together different stakeholders and co-operating with the European partners (EU Committee of the Regions) to achieve progress in Mostar is a concrete example of a follow-up action to the Recommendations emerging from Congress election observation missions.

The most recent activity in this context is a visit of a Congress delegation to Sarajevo and Mostar on 26 and 27 November 2019, conceived as a follow-up to the decision of the European Court of Human Rights (the case of Baralija vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina), it also included an outlook on the situation in 2020, where general local elections will be held in October.

Local and regional elections observed by the Congress since 2001

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2019	Republic of Moldova	Local Elections	20 October 2019	Vladimir PREBILIC (Slovenia, SOC, L)	To be submitted at the 38 th Session
2019	Turkey	Repeat Mayoral Elections in Istanbul	23 June 2019	Andrew DAWSON (United Kingdom, R, ECR)	CG37(2019)14
2019	Turkey	Local Elections	31 March 2019	Andrew DAWSON (United Kingdom, R, ECR)	CG37(2019)14
2018	Slovenia	Local Elections	18 November 2018	Robert GRUMAN (Romania, R, EPP-CCE)	CPL36(2019)02
2018	Poland	Local Elections	21 October 2018	Jos WIENEN (Netherlands, L, EPP-CCE)	CG36(2019)18
2018	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Elections of cantonal assemblies	7 October 2018	Stewart DICKSON (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CPR36(2019)02 Recommendation 432 (2019)
2018	Republic of Moldova	Early Local Elections in Chisinau, Balti	20 May 2018	Gunn-Marit HELGESEN (Norway, R, EPP-CCE)	CG35(2018)22
2018	Tunisia	Municipal Elections	6 May 2018	Xavier CADORET (France, L, SOC)	CG35(2018)10

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2018	Netherlands	Local Elections	21 March 2018	Stewart DICKSON (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CPL35(2018)04
2017	Georgia	Local Elections	21 October 2017	Stewart DICKSON (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CPL34(2018)03
2017	the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Local Elections	15 October 2017	Karim Van OVERMEIRE (Belgium, R, NR)	CPL34(2018)02final Recommendation 413 (2018)
2017	Armenia	Elections to the Council of Elders of Yerevan	14 May 2017	Liisa ANSALA (Finland, L, ILDG)	CPL33(2017)04
2017	Finland	Local Elections	9 April 2017	Lelia HUNZIKER (Switzerland, L, SOC)	CPL33(2017)05 Recommendation 408 (2017)
2017	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Post-Electoral dialogue – 25 to 26 May 2017 - CPL33(2017)03			
2016	Republic of Moldova	Elections for the Popular Assembly of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia	20 November 2016	Sevdia UGREKHELIDZE (Georgia, R, EPP-CCE)	CPR32(2017)02
2016	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Local elections	2 October 2016	Stewart DICKSON (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG32(2017)16 Recommendation 399 (2017)
2016	Armenia	Local by-elections	18 September 2016	Liisa ANSALA (Finland, L, ILDG)	CPL31(2016)02

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2016	Serbia	Local and Provincial Elections	24 April 2016	Karim Van OVERMEIRE (Belgium, R, NR)	CG31(2016)21
2016	Albania	Post-Electoral dialogue - 24 to 26 February 2016 - CG30(2016)15			
2015	Ukraine	Local Elections	25 October 2015	Jos WIENEN (Netherlands, L, EPP-CCE)	CG30(2016)07-final Recommendation 386 (2016)
2015	Albania	Local Elections	21 June 2015	Stewart DICKSON (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CPL/2015(29)2 Recommendation 377 (2015) Resolution 388 (2015)
2015	Republic of Moldova	Local Elections	14 June 2015	Line VENNESLAND FRASER (Norway, L, CRE)	CPL/2015(29)3 Recommendation 378 (2015)
2015	Republic of Moldova	Elections of the Bashkan (Governor) and partial elections to the People's Assembly of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia	22 March 2015	Lars O. MOLIN, Sweden (L, EPP-CCE)	CPR/2015(29)3
2014	Georgia	Local Elections	15 June 2014	Jos WIENEN (Netherlands, L, EPP/CCE)	CPL(27)5FINAL Recommendation 360 (2014)
2014	Ukraine	Pre-term Local Elections	25 May 2014	Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom, L, ILDG)	CPL(27)4FINAL Recommendation 359 (2014)

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2014	Netherlands	Municipal Elections	19 March 2014	Pearl PEDERGNANA (Switzerland, L, SOC)	CPL(27)3FINAL Recommendation 358 (2014)
2013	Armenia	Elections for the Agavani (Assembly) of the City of Yerevan	5 May 2013	Stewart DICKSON (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CPL(25)3FINAL Recommendation 344 (2013) Resolution 359 (2013)
2013	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Municipal Elections	24 March 2013	Jüri LANDBERG (Estonia, L, ILDG)	CPL(25)4FINAL Recommendation 345 (2013) Resolution 360(2013)
2012	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Local Elections	7 October 2012	Amy KOOPMANSCHA P (The Netherlands, L, SOC)	CPL(24)3PROV Recommendation 339 (2013) Resolution 355 (2013)
2012	Armenia	Local by-elections	9 and 23 September 2012	Henry FERAL (France, L, EPP/CCE)	CPL(24)2REV Recommendation 338 (2013)
2012	Serbia	Local Elections	6 May 2012	Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom, L, ILDG)	Report CPL(23)3 Recommendation 330 (2012) Resolution 348 (2012)
2011	Bulgaria	Local Elections	23 October 2011	Mihkel JUHKAMI (Estonia, L, EPP/CD)	CG(22)5 Recommendation 318 (2012) Resolution 338 (2012)

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2011	Norway	Test on E-voting in the framework of Local Elections	12 September 2011	Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom, L, ILDG) and Devrim CUKUR (Turkey, R, SOC)	CG/BUR(21)9
2011	Republic of Moldova	Local Elections	5 June 2011	Hannes WENINGER (Austria, L, SOC)	CPL(21)4 Recommendation 313 (2011) Resolution 329 (2011)
2011	Albania	Local Elections	8 May 2011	Volfram GEBEL (Germany, L, EPP/CD)	CPL(21)3 Recommendation 312 (2011) Resolution 328 (2011)
2010	Republic of Moldova	Elections of the Bashkan (Governor) of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia	12 December 2010	Volfram GEBEL, Germany (EPP-CD)	CG/BUR(19)34
2010	Ukraine	Local Elections	31 October 2010	Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom, L, ILDG)	CG(20)7 Recommendation 303 (2011) Resolution 322 (2011)
2010	Georgia	Local Elections	30 May 2010	Günther KRUG (Germany, R, SOC)	CG(19)8 Recommendation 291 (2010) Resolution 311 (2010)
2009	Azerbaijan	Municipal Elections	23 December 2009	Francis LEC (France, L, SOC)	CPL(18)2 Recommendation 284 (2010) Resolution 300 (2010)

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2009	Armenia	First Municipal Elections in Yerevan	31 May 2009	Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom L, ILDG)	CPL(17)5 Recommendation 277 (2009)
2009	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Local Elections	22 March 2009	Paolo RONDELLI (San Marino, L, SOC)	CG(16)16REP Recommendation 269 (2009)
2008	Israel	Local Elections	11 November 2008	Jean-Claude FRECON (France, L, SOC)	CG/BUR(15)99
2008	Georgia	Elections to the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara	3 November 2008	Günther KRUG (Germany, R, SOC)	CPR(16)2REP Recommendation 264 (2009)
2008	Finland	Electronic voting in the Finnish Municipal Elections	26 October 2008	Keith WHITMORE (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG/CP(15)4
2008	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Local Elections	5 October 2008	Nigel MERMAGEN (United Kingdom, L, ILDG)	CG(15)34REP Recommendation 256 (2008)
2008	Armenia	Local Elections	28 September 2008	Paolo RONDELLI, (San Marino, L, SOC)	CG(15)33REP Recommendation 255 (2008)
2008	Serbia	Local and Provincial Elections	11 and 25 May 2008	Paolo RONDELLI (San Marino, L, SOC)	CG(15)32REP Recommendation 254 (2008) Resolution 275 (2008)
2008	Republic of Moldova	Elections to the People's Assembly in Gagauzia	16 and 30 March 2008	Paolo RONDELLI (San Marino, R, SOC)	CG(15)11REP Recommendation 239 (2008)

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2007	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Presidential Elections in the Republic of Srpska	9 December 2007	Giorgi MASALKINI Georgia (Georgia, R, ILDG)	CG(14)35REP Recommendation 237 (2008) Resolution 254 (2008)
2007	Serbia	Kosovo ¹ Municipal and Assembly Elections	17 November and 8 December 2007	Joe CONWAY (Ireland L, ILDG)	CG(14)34REP Recommendation 236 (2008) Resolution 253 (2008)
2007	Republic of Moldova	Local Elections	3 and 17 June 2007	Joseph BORG (Malta, R, EPP/CCE)	CG(14)23REP Recommendation 227 (2007) Resolution 246 (2007)
2007	Albania	Local Elections	18 February 2007	Jean-Claude FRECON (France, SOC, L)	CG(13)44PART2 Recommendation 214 (2007)
2006	Republic of Moldova	Election of the Bashkan (Governor) of Gagauzia	3 and 17 December 2006	Susan BOLAM (United Kingdom, R, EPP/CCE) and Paolo RONDELLI (San Marino, R, SOC)	CG(13)43PART2 Recommendation 213 (2007) Resolution 232 (2007)
2006	Azerbaijan	Rerun of Local by-elections	6 October 2006	Véronique MOREIRA (France, R, SOC)	CG(13)33PART2 Recommendation 206 (2006) Resolution 225 (2006)

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2006	Georgia	Local Elections	5 October 2006	Wim VAN GELDER (Netherlands, R, EPP/CD)	CG(13)32PART2 Recommendation 205 (2006) Resolution 224 (2006)
2006	Serbia and Montenegro	Referendum on the State-Status of Montenegro	21 May 2006	Keith WITHMORE (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG(13)15 PARTII Recommendation 186 (2006) Resolution 211 (2006)
2006	Ukraine	Local and Regional Elections	26 March 2006	David LLOYD-WILLIAMS (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG(13)10PARTII Recommendation 192 (2006) Resolution 216 (2006)
2005	Palestinian territories	Local Elections (fourth phase)	15 December 2005	Christopher Newbury (United Kingdom, L, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(12)100
2005	Republic of Moldova	Local by-elections	27 November and 11 December 2005	David LLOYD-WILLIAMS (United Kingdom, L, ILDG)	CG/BUR(12)98
2005	Armenia	Local Elections	25 September and 16 October 2005	Sean O'BRIEN (Ireland, L, SOC)	CG/CP(12)13
2005	Republic of Moldova	Local by-elections	10 and 24 July 2005	Pascal MANGIN (France, L, EPP/CCE)	CG/BUR(12)34
2005	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Local Elections	13, 27 March and 10 April 2005	Keith WHITMORE (United Kingdom, R, GILD)	CG/BUR(11)122rev.

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2004	Azerbaijan	Local Elections	17 December 2004	Wim VAN GELDER (Netherlands, R, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(11)95
2004	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Referendum on the new law on municipal boundaries and on decentralisation	7 November 2004	Sean O'BRIEN (Ireland, L, SOC)	CG/BUR(11)75
2004	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Municipal Elections	2 October 2004	Christopher NEWBURY (United Kingdom, L, EPP/CD)	CG/CP(11)13
2004	Serbia and Montenegro	Local Elections	19 September 2004	Alain CHENARD (France, Honorary member, former President of the Congress)	CG/CP(11)14
2004	Georgia	Regional Elections in Adjara (Georgia)	20 June 2004	Joseph BORG (Malta, R, EPP/CD) and Ian MICALEFF (Malta, L, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(11)40
2004	Serbia and Montenegro	Presidential Elections	13 and 27 June 2004	Ayse Bahar CEBI (Turkey, L, EPP/CD) and Christopher NEWBURY (United-Kingdom, L, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(11)26

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2004	Romania	Local and Regional Elections	6 June 2004	Günther KRUG (Germany, R, SOC)	CG/BUR(11)25
2004	Ukraine	Mayoral Election in the town of Mukachevo	18 April 2004	Joseph BORG (Malta, R, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(10)125
2003	Albania	Local by-elections in Tirana	28 December 2003	Yavuz MILDON (Turkey, R, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR10(87)
2003	Republic of Moldova	Regional elections in Gagauzia	16 and 30 November 2003	Christopher NEWBURY (United Kingdom, L, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(10)89
2003	Serbia and Montenegro	Presidential Elections	16 November 2003	Joseph BORG (Malta, R, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(10)70
2003	Albania	Local elections	12 October 2003	Helene LUND (Denmark, L, SOC)	CG/CP(10)16
2003	Republic of Moldova	Local Elections	25 May and 8 June 2003	Yavuz MILDON (Turkey, R, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(10)19
2002	Serbia and Montenegro	Municipal elections in Kosovo ¹	26 October 2002	Thomas JIRSA (Czech Republic, L)	CG/BUR(9)80

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Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2002	Armenia	Local Elections	20 October 2002	Christopher NEWBURY (United Kingdom, L, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(9)60
2002	Republic of Moldova	Regional Elections in Gagauzia	6 and 22 October 2002	Yavuz MILDON (Turkey, L, EPP/CD) and Noreen RYAN (Ireland, R)	CG/BUR(9)59
2002	Bosnia and Herzegovina	General Local Elections	5 October 2002	Keith WHITMORE (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG/BUR(9)58
2002	Serbia and Montenegro	Local by-elections	28 July 2002	Owen MASTERS (United Kingdom, R)	CG/BUR(9)40
2002	Georgia	Local Elections	2 June 2002	Keith WHITMORE (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG/BUR(9)17
2002	Ukraine	Local and Regional Elections	31 March 2002	Christopher NEWBURY (United Kingdom, L, EPP/CD)	CG/BUR(8)164
2001	Slovak Republic	Regional Elections	1 December 2001	Martin HAAS (Switzerland, L)	CG/BUR(8)99
2001	Georgia	Regional Elections and elections for Head of Republic held in the Autonomous Region of Adjara	4 November 2001	Keith WHITMORE (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	CG/BUR(8)97

Year	Country	Elections observed	Date of the elections	Rapporteurs	Report and/or Recommendation and/or Resolution
2001	Croatia	Local Elections	20 May 2001	Keith WHITMORE (United Kingdom, R, ILDG)	<u>CG/BUR(8)12</u>

Congress Rules and Procedures (extracts)

The Congress is governed by statutory resolutions adopted by the Committee of Ministers under the authority of the Statute of the Council of Europe and by its own principles aimed at amplifying these statutory texts. The topics presented below are extracts of the Rules and Procedures adopted by the Congress at its 31th Session on 21 October 2016. They relate, in principle, to the basics of election observation missions, the post-electoral dialogue and the composition of respective Congress' delegations.

General provisions on election observation

Following an invitation by the authorities of a country to observe local and/or regional elections, the Congress Bureau decides on the acceptance of the invitation and on the scale of the operation (electoral assessment mission, pre-election mission, observation mission). The Congress is free to emphasise the different steps. In the absence of a Bureau meeting, the Congress President takes the necessary decision, after consultation with the Presidents of the Chambers.

The Congress may also decide not to deploy an observation mission following an invitation, if the latter arrives too late to ensure a meaningful observation process. An official invitation should be received by the Congress at the latest 60 days prior to the Election Day.

Delegations for election observation

The Secretariat sends a call for interest, including the application form, to the e-mail addresses of all Congress members. Secretaries and Heads of national delegations receive a copy. Congress members who express their interest and send back the form by a given deadline will be considered. Candidatures from members of national associations whose associations agree to cover their costs shall also be taken into consideration. In the same

way as it strengthened its co-operation with national associations, the Congress may invite the European Union's Committee of the Regions to join its delegation on observation missions.

Based on candidatures received within the given deadline, the Secretary General of the Congress proposes a draft delegation, including the delegation's leadership, normally involving between 5 and 20 members.

The composition of delegations is determined according to an appointment system taking into account a balanced representation of the different political groups of the Congress, gender balance and a fair geographical representation and also taking into account the chronological order of candidacies put forward by the members.

A delegation usually comprises the Congress members, as described above, and one or more members of the Congress Secretariat as well as a consultant in electoral matters, when appropriate. The delegation is generally accompanied by interpreters to facilitate communication between speakers of the language of the country in question and the delegation, whose working languages are English and French.

In order to ensure a meaningful participation in the work of the mission, the candidate's language skills (in at least one of the official languages of the Council of Europe) will be taken into consideration. In addition, experience in election observation and participation in training sessions are amongst the criteria.

Adequate language skills, conversation techniques and capacities in political dialogue, as well as experience in election observation and monitoring activities and participation in training sessions of the Congress, are criteria for the appointment of the Head/Rapporteur of the delegation.

Observation delegations should not include Congress members from the country in which the elections are going to be monitored and from countries with special relations with the respective country.

Members taking part in a pre-election visit are expected to also be available for the main election observation mission.

Reporting after election observation

A written report will be drawn up by the Rapporteur with the assistance of the Congress Secretariat and the consultant in electoral matters, when appropriate. It should reflect the opinion of the members of the entire delegation. The report must be comprehensive, noting positive and negative factors, distinguishing between significant and insignificant factors. It should identify patterns that could have an impact on the integrity of the election process and on the authenticity of the vote.

It must also take account of Resolutions/Recommendations previously adopted by the Congress, including those arising from the monitoring of the country concerned, as well as relevant opinions and recommendations from other Council of Europe bodies and international organisations and institutions.

Post-electoral dialogue

The importance of election observation at local and regional level and its complementarity to the political monitoring process of the European Charter of Local Self-Government has been broadly acknowledged within the Council of Europe. In order to ensure coherence and effectiveness of these tools and the implementation of recommendations emerging from its election observation missions, the Congress has introduced the post-election observation dialogue. This procedure may be put into place at the joint request of the Congress and the national authorities to which the Committee of Ministers addressed a Congress recommendation on observation of local/regional elections as well as of central election commissions and/or other national authorities in charge of electoral management and/or representatives of political forces and/or national associations of local and regional authorities. The Permanent Representative of the country concerned, the Head and the Secretary of the national delegation to the Congress will be duly informed of the post-electoral dialogue process. It comprises the following steps:

- a. a presentation of the Congress' Recommendation to the relevant national authorities, notably central election commissions and/or other national authorities in charge of electoral management;
- b. an exchange of views with the relevant national authorities, notably central election commissions and/or other national authorities in charge of electoral management, as well as other competent stakeholders;
- c. the drawing-up of an implementation timetable by the Congress delegation in co-operation with the relevant national authorities, notably central election commissions and/or other relevant authorities in charge of electoral management, as well as other competent stakeholders, in order to put the recommendations agreed on as priorities into practice;
- d. on the basis of this implementation timetable, if appropriate, an action plan or co-operation programme will be developed in association with other relevant departments of the Council of Europe.

Delegations for post-electoral dialogue

The delegation may comprise the Head of delegation/Rapporteur – or in case of non-availability – any member of the Congress election observation mission as well as the Rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee in charge of the respective country. If appropriate, the post-electoral delegation will be accompanied by a Congress' Thematic Spokesperson on observation of local and regional elections and/or a consultant in electoral matters.

As guardian of local and regional democracy, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has been observing some hundred local and regional elections over the last twenty years.

The compilation "Twenty years of the Congress' experience in electoral matters" retraces how the Congress became a well-established institution in the field. It also highlights the substantial achievements made by many countries in Europe in respect of European standards in electoral matters. It eventually explores the recurring transversal issues that have been identified at grassroots level.

The Congress, in co-operation with its strategic partners, is committed to continue supporting countries who are interested in welcoming international observers on their territories by deploying a delegation of its members on the ground and by drafting meaningful recommendations to contribute to better electoral processes.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 47 member states. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 648 elected officials representing more than 150 000 local and regional authorities.

