

JOINT STATEMENT
on Bashkan elections in autonomous territorial
unit of Gagauzia within the Republic of Moldova

We welcome the public commitments made by the Government of Moldova and local authorities in Gagauzia that the December 3 elections and any possible run-off elections for Gagauz Governor (Bashkan) be held in a free, fair and transparent manner.

This election represents an important opportunity to demonstrate to all persons on the entire territory of Moldova and to the international community that Moldova respects and enforces the principles of autonomy, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

This election is a significant test case to prove that strong regional autonomy and development can exist within a democratic, sovereign, and territorially whole Republic of Moldova.

During these final days leading up to the elections and while the elections are taking place the Heads of Mission call on the Government of Moldova, local authorities in Gagauzia, and the Gagauz Central Electoral Commission to fulfill the joint recommendations of the Council of Europe, the OSCE, international observers and local organizations. We urge all authorities to ensure full respect for the law on elections of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia within the Republic of Moldova.

Candidates should be allowed to campaign and communicate with voters in an equal and unfettered manner. Candidates should respect the law and refrain from using administrative resources in promoting their campaigns. Voters should be allowed to express their will freely on the basis of informed choice, and we call upon authorities to ensure freedom of assembly and expression. Registered observers--international, local and candidate--should have unrestricted access to all balloting areas and vote-tallying procedures. We note that the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe will be observing the elections and will be preparing a report on them.

We support these efforts as a crucial step toward strengthening Moldovan democratic institutions and Gagauz regional autonomy.”

28 November 2006

Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria

Embassy of the Czech Republic

Embassy of France

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

Embassy of the Republic of Hungary

Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania

Embassy of the Republic of Poland

Embassy of Romania

Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Embassy of the United States of America

Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Moldova

Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

OSCE Mission to Moldova