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## **NON-PARTISAN PARALLEL TABULATION SHOWS FORMUZAL AHEAD IN VOTE COUNT FOR GAGAUZIA GOVERNOR**

Chisinau, Moldova – A second round of voting took place on 17 December to elect a governor of the Gagauz-Yeri Autonomy, a region of Moldova. Eurasia Foundation Moldova (EFM) held a press conference on Monday morning to announce the preliminary results of grass-roots initiatives undertaken by the League for Defence of Human Rights in Moldova (LADOM), the Association for Participatory Democracy ADEPT and the Association of Independent Press (API).

Announced at the press conference were the preliminary results of parallel vote tabulation carried out by LADOM: with 100% of ballots processed, LADOM reported that Mihai Formuzal is the winner of the election, having received 56% of the vote; Nicolae Dudoglo received 44%. The Central Election Commission of Gagauzia, in its preliminary statements, confirmed the results, as announced by LADOM.

Paul Strutescu, chairman of LADOM, which also managed a domestic observer mission during the election, reported that the second round of voting was conducted, for the most part, freely and fairly. “The atmosphere at polling stations was calm. Voters were not impeded from voting directly, anonymously, and freely. As with the first round of voting on December 4, observers registered some irregularities, but none which might have influenced the final result of the election.”

Sorin Mereacre, EF Country Director for Moldova expressed his gratitude to EFM’s civil society partner organizations for their role the electoral process. “A small but robust coalition of NGOs, and the dedicated people who work for them, ensured that voters in Gagauz-Yeri had trustworthy and non-partisan information during the election. I saw firsthand how these same people, as members of Coalition For Free and Fair Elections 2005, did not sleep during the 2005 Parliamentary election and I know they worked just as tirelessly during this election. It is my hope that we will see many of them continuing their outstanding work protecting voters’ rights during the upcoming local elections in spring 2007.”

EF Program Manager for Free and Fair Elections Radivoje Grujic added that “civil society organizations performed their work during these elections with dedication and professionalism. It is my hope that in future elections, the hurdles they encountered during this election – such as problems with accreditation of observers – will be removed.”

EFM launched its Free and Fair Election of the Governor of Gagauz –Yeri project in October 2006. The project aims to ensure that the outcome of the Gagauz elections reflects the expressed will of an engaged citizenry by enabling civil society organizations to promote a free, fair and democratic election process. The project also works to raise awareness among citizens and authorities of the importance of holding free and fair elections. The project is made possible by financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida/Asdi), USAID, and the National Endowment for Democracy.

For more information about elections in Gagauzia visit [www.alegeri.md](http://www.alegeri.md). For more information about the Eurasia Foundation’s programs in Moldova, contact Liliana Vițu, Program/Communications Officer. Tel: 235343; Fax: 548102, Mobile: 069149217; Email: [lvitu@eurasia.md](mailto:lvitu@eurasia.md)



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