

# Press Release



COUNCIL OF EUROPE    CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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### Elections for the People's Assembly of Gagauzia: second round confirms that the authorities organised elections in accordance with international standards

Chisinau, 31.03.2008 - A delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, including representatives of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, observed the second round of elections for the People's Assembly of Gagauzia in the Republic of Moldova on 30 March 2008.

The delegation covered the whole area of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia, visiting all districts and almost every polling station.

The election was organised by the Gagauzian authorities, on the basis of a local electoral law, with support from the central authorities of Moldova. The Head of Delegation, Mr Paolo Rondelli (San Marino), welcomed the orderly conduct which marked the second round of the elections. The Congress delegation underlined the good cooperation between the central authorities and the authorities of Gagauzia and the implementation of the principle of decision-making as close as possible to the citizens, which also is fundamental from the point of view of the EU's Committee of the Regions.

The delegation found that there was noticeable progress compared to the first round of the elections on 16 March 2008. Additional measures had been taken by the authorities concerning ballot handling and secrecy. The delegation was informed of minor irregularities at several polling stations, which had little impact on the overall robustness of the electoral process. The detailed Congress recommendations following the observation of the first round of the elections remain valid, for example that the paper used for the ballots should be less translucent. Furthermore, mobile voting has to be managed consistently.

For the future, one of the key challenges is to compile and regularly update a central register of eligible voters, to minimise the need for supplementary registration on site. Such registration still occurred on a significant scale, in spite of the fact that the supplementary lists from the first round of the elections were incorporated into the voter rolls used in the second round of the elections.

The Congress will issue a report on the elections and encourages the Gagauzian and central authorities to take full advantage of its recommendations, particularly with a view to the parliamentary elections scheduled for 2009.

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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 Halvdan Skard (Norway, SOC), President of the Chamber of Regions: Yavuz Meldon (EPP/CD, Turkey), 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).

## **Members of the delegation**

### Members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Mr **Paolo Rondelli**, Municipal Councillor of San Marino (San Marino, SOC, R), **Head of delegation**

Mr Mehboob Khan, Member, Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council (United Kingdom, SOC, R)

Ms Véronique Moreira, Regional Councillor of Rhône Alpes (France, SOC, R)

### Members of the EU Committee of the Regions, External Relations Commission (RELEX)

Ms Sharon Taylor, Member, East of England Regional Assembly (United Kingdom, PES)

Ms Heini Utunen Ziv, Member, Jyväskylä City Council, (Finland/ALDE)

### **Congress Secretariat**

**Mr Fredrik Holm, Head of the Coordination and Management Division**

**Ms Gönül Koçak, Congress Secretariat**

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