

EUROPEAN DOMESTIC OBSERVER FORUM

CONFERENCE DECLARATION

Zagreb, 29 June 2003

We the domestic non-partisan election monitoring groups attending the European Domestic Observer Forum, sponsored by the European Commission and the OSCE, agree upon and declare the following:

Domestic non-partisan election monitoring is a safeguard to genuine democratic elections and thus defends and promotes basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In order to strengthen the election process in our countries, we agree and pledge ourselves to the following principles of conducting domestic nonpartisan domestic election monitoring, also stated in the Zagreb Commitments:

- impartiality and non-partisanship;
- objectivity;
- transparency and responsibility;
- reporting in a neutral, accurate and verifiable manner;
- dedication and respect for the principles of democracy and the rule of law; and
- solidarity among organizations and individuals that seek to promote democracy in their countries and abroad.

Monitors from domestic non-partisan election groups should be permitted effective access at all stages of the electoral process. Monitors should receive appropriate credentials for this purpose a sufficient period of time prior to elections to enable them to organize their activities effectively. Applicable legal provisions and necessary regulation of monitors should allow them to conduct their activities effectively.

We call on all countries in our region to ensure the exercise of civil and political rights, consistent with their obligations and commitments under international law, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Copenhagen Document. These documents require that domestic legal provisions must promote the effective exercise of those rights and ensure that it is not hindered or restricted in any way.

We reaffirm our right to associate, including the right to form, join and participate effectively in non-governmental organizations and to cooperate with similar groups and international organizations. In this regard, we remind our governments of all their commitments under the Copenhagen Document, particularly the right of domestic non-partisan monitoring groups to receive financial contributions from both national and international sources.

Signed,

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Afghanistan
Albanian Institute for Election System Development (INSIZ), Albania
Association Transparency, Peru
Centre for Civic Initiatives (CCI), Bosnia and Herzegovina
Centre for Democratic Transitions (CDT), Republic of Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)
Centre for Monitoring (CEMI), Republic of Montenegro (Serbia and Montenegro)
Centre for Monitoring Election Violence, Sri Lanka

Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID), Serbia and Montenegro
Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, Kyrgyzstan
Coalition for the Neutral Monitoring of Elections, Georgia
Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), Ukraine
For the Sake of Civil Society, Azerbaijan
GONG, Croatia
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Coalition of NGOs – Izbori, Bosnia and Herzegovina
International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Georgia
It's Your Choice (IYC), Armenia
LADOM, Moldova
MEHR, Tajikistan
MEMO98, Slovakia
Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition, United States of America
MOST citizen's Association, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Obcianske Oko, Slovakia
Partnership, Belarus
Pro-Democracy Association, Romania
Republican Network of Independent Monitors, Kazakhstan
Society for Democratic Culture, Albania
VOICE Coalition, Russian Federation
Women's Republican Council, Armenia
Women Voters, Tajikistan