



Council of Europe
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

in co-operation with
THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

3RD EUROPEAN CONFERENCE
OF ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES¹

“DEVELOPMENT AND CODIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL
STANDARDS IN THE FIELD OF ELECTIONS”

Moscow, 22 - 23 May 2006

SYNOPSIS

¹ This activity was organised within the framework of the Joint Programme between the European Commission and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe “Democracy through free and fair elections”.

The “Third European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies – Development and codification of international standards in the field of elections” was organised by the Venice Commission in co-operation with the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation. This activity was one of the first events organised in the framework of the Russian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The issues which were addressed during the conference included the development of electoral standards by international organisations and their implementation in the different Council of Europe member States, the impact of new technologies on the electoral process and the security of transmitting the results as well as the role which disseminating information on the electoral process plays in increasing voters' participation.

The conference was attended by approximately 120 participants coming from different Russian public institutions and NGOs, as well as representatives of national Electoral management bodies from Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, and members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Representatives of the following international and regional organisations also attended this event: OSCE/ODIHR, the Community of Independent States (CIS), International IDEA, the Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials (ACEEEO) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

Reports were presented by Messrs A. Veshnyakov (President of the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation), A. Grouchko (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation), U. Mifsud Bonnici (Vice-President of the Venice Commission, Malta), V. Rushailo (Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee), Vladimir Lysenko (Russian Federation), M. Carillo (Mexico), V. Dronov (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), I. Micallef (CLRAE), V. Zhdanovitch and G.-H. Ahrens (OSCE/ODIHR), I. Krotov (Secretary General of the inter-parliamentary assembly of the CIS), R. Krimmer (Austria), Mrs K. Lemon (Sweden), Mrs M. Gratschew (IDEA) and Mr Z. Toth (ACEEEO).

The Conference:

1. Took note of the different views expressed by the participants on the possible codification of international standards in electoral matters. At the same time, the participants invited the Member States of the Council of Europe to respect and implement the international obligations and commitments by which they are bound and to follow the recommendations of the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe.
2. Discussed recent developments on e-voting in different countries (including its observation) and looks forward to the Council of Europe review on its recommendation on e-voting to take place in Autumn 2006.
3. Discussed various ways to increase voters' participation including groups of persons with traditionally low participation, for example, minorities and persons with special needs.

4. Welcomed the creation of the on-line VOTA forum and invited the participating institutions to use it more actively.
5. Requested the Venice Commission to organise the 4th European Electoral Management Bodies' conference in Strasbourg in 2007² (if possible, after the ACEEEO meeting).
6. Encouraged the establishment of an informal group which could work together with the Secretariat of the Venice Commission on preparing the 4th Electoral Management Bodies' conference.

The Conference of the Electoral Management Bodies expresses its gratitude to the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation for hosting and conducting of the 3rd Conference of European Electoral Management Bodies in Moscow.

² The exact title will be fixed as soon as possible (from the list of subjects proposed by the EMB participants in 2005 which is available on the VOTA Forum).