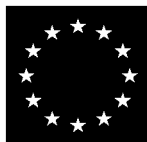




Council of Europe  
European Commission



Conseil de l'Europe  
Commission européenne



Strasbourg, le 22 February 2006

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Or. Fr.

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW**  
**(VENICE COMMISSION)**

**in the framework of**  
**THE ROMANIAN CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS**  
**OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**  
**in cooperation with**  
**THE ROMANIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**UNIDEM SEMINAR**

**“THE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR  
A DEMOCRATIC ELECTION”**

**Bucharest, 17-18 February 2006  
Hotel Howard Johnson Grand Plaza**

**SYNOPSIS**

The European Commission for Democracy through Law organised in Bucharest on 17-18 February 2006 a UniDem Seminar on “the pre-conditions for a democratic election”. This seminar was organised in the framework of the Romanian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and in co-operation with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also falls in the framework of the joint programme between the European Commission and the Venice Commission entitled “Democracy through and fair elections”.

The Seminar was opened by Mr Teodor Baconschi, Secretary of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Gianni Buquicchio, Secretary of the Venice Commission, Mr Ștefan Deaconu, Presidential Counselor and Mr Octavian Opriș, President of the Permanent Electoral Authority.

The aim of this event, which was attended by members of Central Electoral Commissions, university professors, politicians and representatives of the civil society, was to emphasise that an election does not just consist of the election day itself but must be put into its general context. Elections which are really democratic are only possible if a certain number of pre-conditions are fulfilled, such as respect for fundamental rights, equal access to media and financing, the organisation of the vote by an impartial body and the existence of an efficient complaints and appeals system.

With the exception of the two latter subjects, the seminar dealt with all the questions which need to be settled prior to an election to guarantee its organisation periodically. Both national and international approaches were examined.

- Respect for fundamental rights, in particular freedom of expression, assembly and association (Mr Didier Vinolas, France);
- Access to Media as a pre-condition for democratic elections (Ms Herdis Thorgeirsdottir, Iceland);
- Methods for media analysis in election observation (Ms Giovanna Maiola, Italy/United Kingdom);
- Financing of electoral campaigns (Mr Hans-Heinrich Vogel, Sweden);
- Issues to be dealt with during long term election observation missions (Mr Nikolai Vulchanov, OSCE/ODIHR);
- Financing of the electoral campaign in Romania (Mr Dan Hăzoparu and Mr Constantin Sima, Romania);
- Campaign financing and media access regulation for referendums (Messrs Uwe Serdült and Tobias Zellweger, Switzerland);
- The chances for an election to be free and fair : how to assure the pre-conditions for a democratic election ? (Ms Maria Gratschew, International IDEA)

The conclusions were made by Lord Russell Johnston, former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe