



NDI Reports

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CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

Election Monitors Help Strengthen Europe's Emerging Democracies

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are undergoing a daunting but promising political transformation from communism to democracy. A crucial element in building a peaceful, democratic and stable political system is the creation of governing institutions representative of and responsible to the citizenry; and key to creating these institutions are democratic elections, without which a government cannot assume political legitimacy.

Merely a decade ago the countries of Central and Eastern Europe emerged from 40 years of communism in which civic groups were either controlled by the state or, as in the case of Poland's *Solidarity* movement, operated underground. Elections were almost non-existent or characterized by intimidation and thinly veiled voter fraud. The revolutions of 1989, in sweeping away communist rule, brought the countries of the region to the starting line in a lengthy process of creating political institutions that reflect the will of the people. Not all countries have proceeded apace. While the Central European countries have largely succeeded in democratizing their political institutions, many of their neighbors in the Balkans have succumbed to nationalist strife or wrestled with poor economic and social conditions, or both.

For all the countries of the region, however, elections were the main vehicle for citizens to initiate democratic transitions,



Members of the Croatian election monitoring group *GONG* turn out in large numbers on election day to provide voters with information and observe election procedures.

and they remain a fundamental mechanism for continued popular political expression. As a result, Central and Eastern Europe, similar to other regions, has seen the emergence and development of civic groups that have organized to protect the integrity of the electoral process. These so-called "domestic, non-partisan election monitoring organizations" have become essential to building

public confidence and promoting participation in democratic election processes in the region.

These monitoring groups act as citizen watchdogs. They ensure public participation in elections. As independent actors reporting objectively on the election environment and results, they serve to legitimize the electoral process in the eyes

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A REGIONAL FOCUS

In this edition of *NDI Reports*, we highlight three NDI regional programs. These programs respond to a growing need and desire by governments, political parties, parliaments and civic groups to address common democracy and governance challenges, establish regional norms and standards, and share ideas and experiences among democratic practitioners and activists.

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of citizens or expose manipulation should it occur. They encourage fairer campaign practices and a more informed electorate, as well as limit the possibility of fraud and irregularities on election day.

NDI has helped to form nonpartisan election monitoring organizations in Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. Predominantly founded by young people, these organizations have recruited, trained and deployed thousands of citizens to observe voting and tabulation procedures inside polling stations on election day, and have produced public statements on the conduct and outcome of elections.

These groups have also focused attention on pre-election environments by holding candidate forums, monitoring media coverage of the campaign and developing party codes of conduct. Several of them, such as Bosnia's *Center for Civic Initiatives* and Macedonia's *Citizens for Citizens*, have multiethnic memberships, demonstrating inclusiveness in countries scarred by ethnic conflict. Each is viewed in its respective country as a leading authority on democratic election standards.

Recognizing the significant advances being made by monitoring groups across the region, NDI hosted a roundtable in Budapest in July 2000 to identify best practices in 10 years of nonpartisan domestic election monitoring. Participants representing 10 organizations and more than 40,000 volunteer members attended. This was the first time that these organizations had come together and since then, the roundtable has generated bilateral and multilateral exchanges between them. Many of the groups face similar challenges, and such exchanges foster regional partnerships to encourage and support their work. They are as eager to learn from each other as from the experiences of more developed democracies.



At the roundtable sponsored by NDI in Budapest in July 2000, 10 civic groups from the region discussed best practices in election monitoring.



Voter outreach efforts by groups such as *Cesid* helped empower the citizens of Serbia during the September 2000 presidential elections.

For example, during the September 2000 Yugoslav elections, monitoring groups from Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria supported the courageous efforts of Serbia's own *Center for Free Elections and Democracy (Cesid)*. All three groups tried to monitor the elections and were thwarted by intense, and at times violent harassment by the Milosevic regime.

Croatia's *Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections (GONG)* recently received a visit from *Kosova Action for Civic Initiatives (KACI)*, their Kosovar counterparts, and together they reviewed methods of election observation as well as

post-election programs and long-term strategic planning. *Cesid* teamed up with Albania's *Society for Democratic Culture* to observe Albania's June 2001 parliamentary elections, and *Cesid* and *KACI* are cooperating to monitor the Kosovar elections set for November 2001.

NDI is also working with the intergovernmental *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)* and the Institute's civic partners in the region and in the former Soviet states to strengthen the role of nonpartisan domestic election observer groups in OSCE countries. In May, the *OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)*, with NDI's cooperation, brought various groups together to discuss lessons learned in election monitoring.

Although the need for election monitoring may ultimately dissipate, NDI's partner organizations have also developed valuable regional networks and the skills necessary to act as watchdogs and democracy advocates between elections—holding public institutions accountable, and promoting links between elected officials and the citizenry. They have helped lay the foundation for the creation of strong democratic election processes and will continue to play a key role as democratic political institutions develop and take root.



Members of *Cesid* engaged in a voter education campaign prior to the Serbian elections last September.

Latin America's Emerging Leaders Initiate Political Party Reform

Latin America has a tradition of some of the oldest and most sophisticated political parties in the world—parties that played key roles in the wave of democracy that swept the region in the 1980s and early 1990s. In recent years, however, there has been a growing crisis of confidence in many of these parties, which are viewed as being ineffective, corrupt, and out of touch with their constituencies. This disenchantment has given rise to populist leaders with authoritarian tendencies, who are threatening democratic institutions in the region.

Parties are attempting to restore their credibility in a number of ways, including emphasizing issues of ethics in public policy, modernizing party structures, and broadening citizen participation, especially among marginalized communities such as women, youth and indigenous peoples.

In 1995 NDI and the Ministry of the Presidency of Chile brought together 45 political party leaders from 14 countries to discuss the common challenges facing parties and to recommend initiatives for party reform. The leaders identified a critical need for more open, democratic and inclusive parties throughout the hemisphere and the establishment of networks to exchange views on efforts to reform, renew and modernize their party organizations.

In response, NDI launched its Political Leadership Program. This long-term regional initiative is designed to train young political leaders, foster stronger relations between parties, and support party modernization and reform efforts.

Each year, the program consists of an intensive two-week leadership development seminar in Washington, D.C., followed by a year-long party strengthening project. This dual process of training and follow-through allows participants not

only to exchange ideas and develop their own skills, but also to apply those techniques in their own countries and share these skills with their party colleagues.

“...Even though one may have a lot of political experience, the material [NDI] has on its web page is extremely useful for all rank and file party members... I plan to apply the various strategies in planning for the 2002 Bolivian elections.”

Ely Eklund Velasco,
Leadership Program participant

Program participants range in age from 25 to 35 and have a track record of leadership and political activism. Participants have included mayors, municipal councilors, lawmakers, legislative advisors, activists from indigenous communities and youth leaders. Their party strengthening projects, which they propose in consultation with their respective leaders, have covered a variety of reform initiatives. These include: enhancing the political participation of indigenous people, women and youth; promoting internal democratic procedures through a review of the parties' decision-making structures and ethics codes; and strengthening party communication and outreach skills.

Through its ongoing contact with each class of participants, NDI is helping foster reform efforts within 21 political parties and movements in Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela.

Visit these monitoring groups' web sites:

Bulgaria: Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights

http://www.bia-bg.com/Business/directory/bschigp_english.htm

Croatia: Citizens Organized to Monitor Elections (GONG)

<http://www.gong.hr/eng/>

Kosovo: Kosova Action for Civic Initiatives (KACI)

<http://www.kaci-kosova.org/>

Macedonia: Citizens for Citizens

<http://www.c4c.org.mk>

Montenegro: Center for Democratic Transition

<http://www.crnvo.cg.yu/Bilten11/CDTUK.htm>

Romania: Pro-Democracy Association

<http://www.sorostm.ro/prodem/prodem/apdenglish/apdctengl.htm>

Serbia: Center for Free Elections and Democracy (Cesid)

<http://www.cesid.org/english>

Slovakia: Civic Eye

<http://www.obcianskeoko.sk>

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Participants from the 2001 Political Leadership Program.

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A companion regional program, the Political Party Network, uses Internet technology to facilitate political parties' access to a worldwide collection of party documents, specific party building techniques and training manuals. This initiative fosters a support network of reform-minded political leaders. The Network's website (www.ndi.org/partidos) provides an on-line international clearinghouse of documents that otherwise would not be readily available to many parties.

Utilizing the expanding Internet technology, young leaders who have participated in the Political Leadership Program are electronically linked through an internet-based "listserv." Here participants

communicate with one another about the political situations in their countries, share ideas about their party-strengthening initiatives, and solicit technical assistance for training from NDI staff and political party experts around the world. In turn, NDI offers guidance and promotes cooperation among the young leaders as they work to modernize their political parties.

The regional network of emerging party reformers has already demonstrated results. For example, one participant from Colombia has stimulated reforms in her party by conducting programs on organization, communication and leadership skills, which increased her party's success at the polls during the October 2000 municipal elections.



Facilitator Giselle Huamani Ober leads a training session during the 2000 program.

NEW NDI BOARD MEMBERS

NDI welcomes six new members to its Board of Directors:

Harriet C. Babbitt, Washington D.C. Senior Public Policy Scholar, Woodrow Wilson Center, former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States; **Paul L. Cejas**, Miami, Florida. Business Executive, former U.S. Ambassador to Belgium; **Harold Hongju Koh**, New Haven, Connecticut. Professor of International Law, Yale Law School, former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; **Nicholas A. Rey**, Washington D.C. Principal, Intellibrige Corporation, former U.S. Ambassador to Poland; **Nancy H. Rubin**, Washington D.C. Chair, National Mental Health Awareness Campaign, former Representative to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights; **Elaine K. Shocas**, Washington D.C. Attorney; Consultant, Madeleine Albright Inc., former Chief of Staff, U.S. State Department.

In Mexico, another participant initiated an innovative "rock the vote" campaign and helped her party double its youth membership in Chihuahua.

NDI completed its third seminar of the Political Leadership Program in March this year. Graduates from previous programs shared their party reform projects with the new group, who now join an ever-growing network of young leaders implementing party reform projects across the hemisphere.



Roberto B. Saladin Selin, the Ambassador to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic, addresses this year's participants during their initial training in Washington DC.

Regional Cooperation in Southern Africa Strengthens Parliamentary Structures



Throughout southern Africa, political leaders have a history of cooperation arising from their shared struggle against colonial rule and apartheid. Now many current leaders are working together to promote democracy and economic stability in the region.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed in 1992 to foster regional economic integration in southern Africa. Currently it comprises the governments of 14 countries: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In 1995 the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) was formed to involve parliamentarians in SADC efforts to promote democracy and human rights throughout the region. All the member countries of SADC, with the exception of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Seychelles, have joined the inter-parliamentary body. Altogether, some 1,800 legislators are represented in the Forum.

Headquartered in Windhoek, Namibia, SADC-PF has focused its programs on election observation, increasing women's participation in parliaments, promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation, conflict resolution and regional integration.

In the past, elections in the region were monitored only by outside observers. NDI and SADC-PF launched a collaborative program to develop the Forum's election monitoring capacity modeled on the regional efforts of groups such as the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)* and the *Organization of American States (OAS)*.

SADC-PF has trained members of Parliament and their staffs on the standards of democratic elections, the technical aspects of election monitoring, and developing an institutional capacity to resolve election-related conflicts. SADC-PF has conducted election observation missions in Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In Tanzania and Zimbabwe, the delegations criticized the conduct of the elections there.

In addition to the observer missions, SADC-PF has undertaken a number of important initiatives. These include developing a regional election resource center; creating a regional election resource database; publishing an election



Parliamentary staff from SADC-PF member countries participate in a training workshop in Windhoek, Namibia.



SADC Parliamentary Forum election observers attend a rally in Namibia during the 1999 presidential and parliamentary elections.

observation guide for members of parliament and staff; and conducting election observation seminars for 50 members of parliament and 70 parliamentary staff from 12 SADC countries. It has also facilitated the adoption of norms and standards for elections in the SADC region.

With support from NDI, the Forum recently launched its new website, (www.sadcpf.org), which provides an electronic repository for the Forum's publications and activities, and fosters inter-parliamentary cooperation among SADC parliaments. The website includes a guide to election observation based on international norms and standards, and information that will facilitate communication among parliamentarians on other key regional issues such as conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS and democratic institution building.

Transparencia—Civic Activists Spur Peru’s Democratic Transition

In response to President Alberto Fujimori’s increasing disregard for Peru’s democratic institutions and the virtual collapse of the country’s political parties, a small group of courageous democrats came together in 1994 to form the civic organization *Transparencia*.

Focusing on the presidential election in 1995, *Transparencia* quickly grew from a small organization in Lima to a national network of thousands of volunteers with 47 regional committees. It has since evolved into the most influential nonpartisan participant in the Peruvian political process and has gained hemisphere-wide recognition for the role it has played in exposing corruption and electoral fraud in Peru.

Transparencia is the first civic organization in Peru’s history to organize citizens to observe the electoral process and verify election results. Its efforts have created an avenue for citizens to participate in the electoral process and have helped rebuild public confidence in the country’s democratic institutions. *Transparencia* recruited, trained and deployed more than 9,000 volunteers to participate as election observers in the 1995 elections, and in 2001 was able to mobilize 20,000 monitors throughout the country.

Transparencia has also effectively used the so-called “parallel vote tabulation” (PVT). This is a method of projecting the outcome of an election by using monitors to obtain official results from a statistically random sample of individual voting stations, and releasing them before the final results are announced by the electoral authorities. The PVT has proven to be an essential tool in exposing electoral fraud or confirming the official results.



***Transparencia* election monitors help to direct voters during Peru’s June 3rd runoff presidential elections.**

In the presidential and congressional races of 1995, *Transparencia*’s PVT played a key role in legitimizing the election results. *Transparencia*’s parallel count during the first round of the 2000 elections, which showed that Fujimori failed to gain the 50 percent needed to avoid a runoff, enjoyed greater public confidence than did the official count itself. After protracted delays, the results released by Peruvian electoral authorities confirmed *Transparencia*’s unofficial count.

It was the illegitimacy of the 2000 electoral process, together with a series of political events capped by the release of thousands of videotapes documenting the corrupt dealings of his regime, that ultimately led to Fujimori’s downfall later that year. Fujimori was succeeded by an interim government led by President Paniagua, which immediately began to restructure the electoral authorities and undertake other confidence-building measures.

In the run-up to the April 2001 elections, *Transparencia* sponsored a Pact of Civility (*Pacto Cívico*), signed by seven of the eight presidential candidates. The pact represented a major effort to boost public confidence, which had been almost destroyed by the harassment and intimidation that characterized last year’s election. In addition, *Transparencia*’s election monitors worked closely with



***Transparencia*’s Election Manual is used to educate Peruvian citizens on their rights in the electoral process.**

international observers to ensure that these elections would be genuinely democratic. The monitors were again deployed in the June run-off election, which was won by Alejandro Toledo.

Since 1994 NDI has provided financial and technical assistance for *Transparencia*’s important efforts. For more information visit the group’s web site at www.transparencia.org.pe.

New NDI Offices and Programs

NIAMEY, NIGER

In May 2001 NDI established an office in Niamey, Niger, to work with the National Assembly of Niger to help it become a more effective law-making body. The program will include ongoing programs for Members of the Assembly on legislative review and analysis, and will provide practical support for public outreach activities such as town hall meetings, radio programs and the development of civic education materials.

NAIROBI, KENYA

In July 2001 NDI re-opened its office in Nairobi, Kenya, to offer long-term assistance to political parties. The program will provide support for parties to participate more effectively in the electoral process, engage in public policy debates and adopt internal democratic procedures.

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

In the run-up to the scheduled November 2001 presidential and parliamentary elections, NDI opened a new office in Lusaka. NDI-sponsored activities will include technical assistance to coalitions of non-governmental organizations in election monitoring techniques, an audit of the voters' roll, training for political party pollwatchers, and the organization of a parallel vote tabulation on election day.

DILI, EAST TIMOR

Since establishing a field office in Dili in March 2001, NDI's staff have been working to implement *Civic Forum East Timor (CFET)*, a project promoting sustained citizen participation in Timorese political processes. NDI will also work to promote dialogue among Timorese political parties, helping to develop a code of conduct for the upcoming elections, promote popular confidence and reduce the likelihood of renewed political violence.

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

In a country attempting to recover from a brutal internal war, NDI opened an office in Freetown in May 2001 to promote political participation by youth and women, and to help political parties include more women and youth in their ranks. It is hoped that the program participants will be encouraged to become leaders in their communities and to run for office.

KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

After the recent legalization of political parties, NDI established a permanent presence in Kinshasa in April 2001 to help political parties participate effectively in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and improve the prospects for an inclusive and meaningful transition. An NDI-sponsored conference in June

focused on facilitating discussion between political parties on issues including: constitutional and electoral reforms; negotiation processes and consensus building; communication strategies; and the participation of women and other under-represented groups.

BEIRUT, LEBANON

Lebanese civil society is becoming more active and sophisticated in articulating policy demands. From issues of electoral reform, to anti-corruption initiatives, to environmental policy, Lebanese NGOs have asked NDI for advice, written materials and training, prompting the opening of an office in Beirut last January. NDI's office has established an independent reputation, enabling the Institute to work with groups across the political and sectarian spectrum.



Leaders of the NDI/Carter Center observer delegation to Peru's June 3rd run-off presidential election hold an impromptu briefing at a polling station. Speaking to the press, from left to right, are former president of Guatemala and current Vice President of Guatemala's Legislative Assembly, Ramiro de León-Carpio; former president of Costa Rica, Rodrigo Carazo Odio; and NDI Chairman Madeleine Albright.

DEMOCRACY ONLINE



Log on to Access Democracy through NDI's website www.ndi.org or directly at www.accessdemocracy.org

Around the world, democracy practitioners and activists are using new technologies to improve their access to information and share ideas and experiences. The Internet is a powerful communications tool, ideally suited to international applications.

As the NDI worldwide network has grown, so too has our use of innovative technology to communicate about programs, breaking political events and best practices with our partners, staff, trainers and program participants.

Recent visitors to NDI's web site will notice major changes and improvements. Not only does the site look more modern, it also now houses *Access Democracy*, an online library of democracy materials. *Access Democracy* contains hundreds of the most important documents produced by NDI and our partner organizations over many years of democracy assistance programming, and is designed to grow even larger.

This online collection of publications includes frequently used resources such as the *NDI Handbook: How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: an A to Z Guide*, available in English, French, Spanish, Indonesian and Arabic. It contains the *NDI Legislative Research Series*, a set of comparative analyses on topics such as legislative ethics and the role of committees in parliaments. The library covers other issues such as political party development, anti-corruption initiatives, civic participation efforts, civil-military relations, parliamentary reform and elections processes.

Access Democracy features a sophisticated cataloguing and search mechanism, allowing for complex cross-referencing by topic, country, language and year of publication. It provides the visitor with a methodically ordered list of full-text publications, related web links and other resources.

Access Democracy is designed to provide access to resources and facilitate contacts and discourse among democracy advocates. The Internet makes possible a shared global dialogue unimagined even a decade ago.

Look for a feature story in our next newsletter about how communication technology is allowing the development of innovative democratic governance techniques.



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