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Ukraine: EPP condemns undemocratic conduct of elections; deplores cooperation agreement of European Socialists with governing party

Brussels, 19 November 2010



The Political Assembly of the European People's Party (EPP) has approved today, unanimously, a resolution that condemns the undemocratic conduct of the recent local elections in Ukraine and the regrettable alliance of the European Socialists with the governing Party of Regions:

"The approval of this resolution underlines the widespread disappointment of our political family with the conduct of the local elections in Ukraine. We are also deeply disappointed with the questionable role of the European Socialists in their effort to fulfill their political agreement with the Party of the Regions," EPP President **Wilfried Martens** stated.

[Full text of the resolution:](#)

EPP condemns the conduct of local elections in Ukraine

The European People's Party (EPP) expresses its deep concern over the conduct of local elections in Ukraine. Reports from election monitors and the conclusions of respected international organizations and governments, including the United States Government and the European High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, suggest that Ukraine's October 31 local elections did not comply with good practices of election organization and conduct and failed to meet standards for openness and fairness.

Once more President Viktor Yanukovich and Ukrainian government have failed a crucial democracy test. We condemn the increasingly authoritarian trends and policies in Ukraine that are inconsistent with the country's declared European aspirations. The EPP deeply regrets the setback in democratic standards.

It is clear now that the October 31 local elections were neither equal, fair, free, or transparent. There were constant violations of the OSCE's prescribed standards for democratic elections.

Analysis indicates that the authorities will attempt to use the same mixed electoral system for future parliamentary elections – utilizing the system where the most flagrant violations were used to favor those candidates representing the authorities.

The elections demonstrated the absence of an equal playing field for all political parties to take part in the elections. The Joint Statement by Ukraine's Opposition Parties shows that the Ukrainian authorities do not fulfill the democratic values and the appropriate standards for conducting election campaigns and elections. Numerous violations were reported during the election campaign, on the day of elections and while determining the results of the elections. The largest opposition party, "Batkivshchyna," was denied participation in the regions of Kyiv and Lviv, as well as in many cities and districts in the regions of Luhansk, Ternopil, Kyrovograd and Donetsk. Mass falsifications were reported in the mayoral elections in the cities of Luhansk, Kharkiv and Odessa.

Parliament made changes to the local election law without public discussion. These changes, which were made too close to the election day, facilitated the disproportionate representation of members of the ruling coalition in the election commissions. Furthermore, they facilitated the selective registration of candidates by TECs and for individuals to ignore the law in order to create additional obstacles that prevented certain candidates from participating in the elections. There was a failure by the authorities and law enforcement agencies to react fully and promptly to threats and administrative pressure applied to candidates and commissioners. In addition, there was insufficient oversight by election commissioners of ballot security and printing; improper election day organization and violations during vote counting and tabulation that affected the results in some constituencies.

Unfortunately, an unacceptable conflict of interest, which involves the current head of the Security Service of Ukraine who is also an owner of the country's biggest media holding and a member of the High Council of Justice responsible for appointing and dismissing judges, has not been remedied.

Our deepest concerns expressed in the EPP Resolution on Ukraine of September 13, 2010, were realized. The election campaign and conduct during the elections were even worse than observers and we expected. Large-scale administrative resources were used by the authorities to benefit the ruling party and its candidates.

Attempts by the current government to dismiss negative facts and create obvious window dressing bodies to imitate democratic policies are cause for concern. Real democracy is to be defended by deeds, it is not to be imitated. All respected international observers have stated that the current government has not hesitated in repressing civil society, as well as political opponents, and has concentrated power in its hands. The challenge of authoritarianism is deeply concerning and we again call on those in power in Ukraine to recognize this and to stop anti-European, anti-democratic policies and practices.

The EPP also deplores the cooperation agreement between the European Socialists and the governing Party of Regions and the 'deliverables' of this agreement, which includes the cover-up of the undemocratic conduct of the local elections.

This resolution will be transmitted to the Presidents of the European Council, European Commission and European Parliament in view of the EU-Ukraine Summit on 22 November 2010.

Note to editors:

The EPP is the largest and most influential European-level political party of the centre-right, which currently includes 73 member-parties from 39 countries, the Presidents of the Commission, Council, and Parliament, 14 EU and 6 non-EU heads of state and government, 13 members of the European Commission and the largest Group in the European Parliament.

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