

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT  
BY THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER DELEGATION TO THE  
ROMANIAN PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

**September 29, 1992  
Bucharest, Romania**

The International Observer Delegation organized by the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is pleased to offer this preliminary statement on the September 27th presidential and parliamentary elections in Romania.

Our delegation, comprised of 40 members from 13 countries, observed the elections in 22 regions throughout Romania. The delegation includes parliamentarians, political party leaders, election experts, legal scholars, judges, regional specialists and election officials. The delegation's presence demonstrates the international community's continuing support for the democratization process in Romania. Many of our delegates participated in the institutes' observer missions to the May 1990 and February 1992 elections.

During the campaign period, the institutes were present to monitor the pre-election environment. This delegation's mandate included the examination of three aspects of the election process: the campaign, the balloting, and the tabulation of results. Our statement is an assessment of these findings to date. The institutes will issue a detailed report following our observation of the October 11th run-off election.

The delegation arrived in Romania on September 23rd. Prior to the election, the delegates met at the national and local levels with government officials, political party leaders, civic groups, parliamentary candidates, election bureaus, and journalists. The delegation also held a meeting with the six presidential candidates.

Like the February 1992 local elections, these national elections represent a significant step in Romania's continuing

transition to democracy. The delegation was generally impressed with the diligent and serious work of election officials, the active participation of political parties, and the valuable presence of Romanian "domestic" observers.

In particular, the delegation commends the dedication of the many poll workers (election bureau members) who worked cooperatively through the night to carry out their responsibilities in a conscientious and impartial manner.

The delegation wishes to highlight several positive features of this election. These include: the generally calm and orderly electoral process; the enhanced development of multi-party competition; the increased awareness of and tolerance for diverse political viewpoints; and the increased transparency in the organization and administration of election day procedures.

Despite these positive features, these elections were not without problems. Although access to television by political parties and candidates has greatly improved, the news broadcasts on national television reflected overt and subtle political biases. In addition, inadequate disclosure laws prevented the resolution of concerns over significant imbalances in campaign resources.

The delegation was disturbed by the restrictions placed on nonpartisan domestic observers, especially given the very positive role played by such observers during the February 1992 local elections.

Although the voting and counting were generally open and orderly, the delegation did observe some administrative shortcomings, procedural inconsistencies and irregularities. Of greatest concern were: questions about the impartiality of some polling station officials; numerous incidents of more than one person entering the same voting booth; the form and ease of the use of the ballots; the length of the voting and counting process which led to the extreme fatigue of the poll workers; the continued uncertainty in some cases over the integrity of voter lists; and the release on national television of exit poll results before the voting had been completed.

Looking ahead to the presidential run-off election on October 11th, the delegation urges that all efforts be made to ensure the integrity of the election process. In particular, impartiality in television news coverage of the two presidential candidates will be of the utmost importance and warrants special scrutiny. We also urge that agreements for the conduct of parallel vote counts be made and sustained.

In addition, the delegation recommends future reforms to strengthen the election system, including the establishment of a permanent, independent, and well-staffed election bureau, as well as written uniform procedures for election administration.

In closing, the delegation emphasizes that progress in the conduct of elections, while essential, is but one aspect of the establishment of a democratic civil society. It is apparent that many challenges remain in this regard in Romania, including the creation of an effective parliament responsive to the citizenry, an independent judiciary, the free flow of information at all levels of society, and an abundance of active civic organizations. It is the people of Romania who will strive to meet these challenges. The international community remains committed to supporting their efforts.