



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRE-ELECTION FACT-FINDING DELEGATION TO ALBANIA

Tirane, Albania
January 31, 1992

An international delegation of election experts, organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) of the United States, visited Albania from January 27-31, 1992 to assess the emerging electoral system.

The team met with leaders of the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, Omonia, the Social Democratic Party and the Republican Party. They also met with government officials, including the President of the Republic of Albania, Ramiz Alia, the ministers of Defense and Public Order, and the Director General of the state broadcast corporation. The delegation also travelled to Burrel and Berat, two regional capitals, to meet with party and municipal leaders there. Finally, the delegation met with the organizers of the Society for Free Election and Democratic Culture, a new nonpartisan civic organization. On every occasion we were received with warmth and cooperation, and we want to emphasize how much we appreciate the hospitality that has been extended to us by our Albanian friends.

The delegation consisted of the following persons:

Matyas Eorsi, Member of Parliament (Alliance of Free Democrats), former member of the National Election Commission, Hungary;

Joao Menezes Ferreira, Member of Parliament (Socialist Party), Portugal;

Michael Lavelle, former Chairman, Board of Elections for the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago, U.S.;

Miroslav Sevlievski, Executive Director, Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights, Bulgaria;

Mikhail Yanakiev, Senior Advisor, Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights, Bulgaria;

Thomas O. Melia, Program Director, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, U.S.

The delegation offers the following observations and comments:

1. During the last year, considerable progress has been made in Albania toward the creation of a pluralist society. Yet, serious problems remain, principally in the organization of the economy and the government. After fifty years of incompetent and isolationist government under a harsh totalitarian system, the Albanian people have demonstrated remarkable intelligence, strength and integrity in their efforts to become reintegrated into the international community.

Yet the country has been governed since June 1991 by two successive interim governments based not on the will of the people expressed in free elections but on the basis of an ad hoc agreement among political parties. Albania clearly needs new elections to resolve the current crisis. The establishment of a legitimate government arising from free and meaningful elections is a vital step toward economic rehabilitation.

2. As the Council of Europe and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe have commented in recent days, the draft election law currently pending in the People's Assembly is generally consistent with European and international standards. It is evident that the Albanian drafters of this law have studied carefully the experience of other recent transitions in Central and Eastern Europe and adapted numerous important lessons to the present Albanian situation.

For instance, the draft explicitly provides for the presence before, during and after the election of domestic and international observers. This is welcome, not only because severe restrictions were placed on international observers in 1991, but because of the recent formation of an Albanian nonpartisan civic organization, the Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture. The activities of similar groups in other countries, such as in Bulgaria, have contributed significantly to the process of democratization and should be welcomed in Albania.

Furthermore, the requirement that a candidate for the People's Assembly present 400 signatures (in constituencies of about 20,000 voters) is a modest and useful threshold that enables a wide variety of candidates to be presented to the public while establishing a test of credibility that only frivolous candidates cannot meet.

3. One important lesson of the region's recent history is reflected in the draft law's provisions concerning participation by organizations largely representing ethnic minorities. Article 13 provides that such organizations may present candidates throughout the country, even if they are not formally registered as political parties. This is a commendable and important gesture to a distinct minority nationality and should contribute a great deal to the necessary process of democratic development in an ethnically diverse state. If the Greek minority were to be systematically excluded from participating in the elections throughout the country, then the law's attractiveness, from the perspective of a democratic sensibility, would diminish considerably.

4. Albanians have given themselves little time to prepare for the imminent elections, which are expected to occur in early March. The draft election law has not yet been enacted, and the needs to happen very soon. The internal timetables established in the draft law seem to understate the time needed to prepare properly for a meaningful election, although an administratively correct election could be held. It would be better to postpone the voting for a week or two than to rush

into an ill-prepared election. In this regard we are pleased to note that the Council of Ministers has already sent instructions to regional and municipal authorities to commence delineation of electoral zone boundaries. Interim Municipal Executive Councils should be directed to prepare voter registries and to publicize the new locations of voting sites as soon as possible.

5. The Central Election Commission -- which we believe should be designated and should begin its work informally, even before enactment of the election law -- will require technical assistance. Documents need to be prepared, information collected and assembled, a nationwide communications network secured, and logistical arrangements made for election day. There are agencies and organizations abroad that can be helpful in this regard, and so it is important that the government of Albania or the Central Election Commission request such assistance as soon as possible.

All available Albanian institutions should be placed under the temporary authority of the Central Election Commission for the purpose of implementing the elections, including the municipal authorities, the national police and the armed forces.

6. Given the extraordinary situation in which virtually no publications have been published in the past three months, the broadcast media has assumed much greater influence and should act with even greater responsibility than would normally be the case. The draft electoral law provides that certain time be allocated to parties during the campaign based on the number of candidates nominated, and we know that on most days at least an hour of television time is now devoted to political topics. These are good initiatives. The managers of the broadcast media should also propose to the Central Election Commission a written plan for the allocation of television and radio time throughout the campaign, for the presentation of news and discussion programs, and for the organization of debates.

Article 56 of the draft electoral law provides that programs be developed for the television and radio explaining the electoral process to the public. This is an excellent provision that should be implemented as soon as possible. The National Democratic Institute has expressed to the appropriate officials its willingness to assist directly in the preparation of these broadcasts.

In the circumstances of the severe paper shortage, one of the major indicators of the fairness of the coming campaign will be the manner in which scarce paper is distributed in the country.

7. The Society for Free Elections and Democratic Culture has recently been created in Albania and we look upon this as a healthy step in the development of a pluralist political culture. Among other things, the organization intends to deploy volunteer election monitors to all regions of the country to assess the implementation of the election law in the weeks ahead, and to be present in the voting stations on election day. Although the draft explicitly permits this, it is not clear how domestic observers will be accredited by the Election Commission and this should be clarified as soon as possible. We hope that the Society for Free Elections, and other nonpartisan organizations, will be given full cooperation by the Central Election Commission, political parties and government offices. The work of such an organization can contribute substantially to social peace and a meaningful election.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud.

Secondly, the document highlights the need for transparency and accountability in all financial operations. It states that all transactions should be clearly documented and accessible to the appropriate authorities for review and audit.

Finally, the document stresses the importance of regular communication and reporting. It requires that all relevant parties be kept informed of the status of the financial system and any potential risks or issues.

In conclusion, the document outlines a comprehensive framework for financial management. It provides clear guidelines for record-keeping, transparency, and communication, ensuring that the financial system operates in a secure and efficient manner.

The following sections provide detailed information regarding the specific procedures and policies that must be followed to ensure compliance with the requirements outlined in this document.

It is the responsibility of all personnel involved in financial operations to adhere strictly to these guidelines and to report any violations immediately to the appropriate authorities.

This document is intended to serve as a guide for all financial operations and is subject to periodic review and update. Any changes to the policies and procedures will be communicated to all relevant parties in a timely manner.