



PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE SIGNING OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT DURING THE CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTIONS ON OCTOBER 20, 2002

The Center for Democratic Transition will monitor early parliamentary and local elections (in Podgorica and Tivat), which will be held on October 20, 2002. We would like to remind you that these are the fifth elections that CDT will monitor.

We welcome the agreement of the political parties about the harmonization of the amendments on the Election Law. We also appeal for the election of the Constitutional Court as soon as possible in order to obtain the necessary conditions for conducting elections.

Within its activities, the Center for Democratic Transition would monitor the pre-election campaign of political parties and the work of the Republic and Municipal organs in charge of administering the election process. We will also observe with our monitors and mobile teams the voting procedure and counting of the results, as well as the post-election period and verification of the expressed will of citizens. With the aim to monitor the election process qualitatively, CDT engaged 36 Municipal and Regional coordinators, and CDT would have more than 1,000 monitors at almost all polling stations on the Election Day. Also, we would carry out the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT method), which would enable us to have an estimation of the preliminary results only one hour after the closure of the polling stations.

This is the third time that the Center for Democratic Transition has offered to the political parties "A Code of Conduct during the Parliamentary and Local elections in Podgorica and Tivat in October 2002". We believe that the previous two Codes have improved the pre-election campaign. It is foreseen in the Code that the parties are obliged to adhere to the designated regulations during the campaign in which the political contestants would compete in a proper manner for the voters' trust.

Tolerant inter-party relations, observance of the election procedure and legal processes, proper propaganda and organization of public meetings, respect for the electoral will of the citizens and tolerant relations towards the public are the basics within this Code.

The core and the spirit of the Code in relation to the previous one has not been changed, it continues to represent a promise of the parties to the citizens that they would conduct a fair and democratic campaign. And, we will monitor whether they adhere to their promises.



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Having in mind the fact that the political parties have not fully observed similar documents in previous elections, the Center for Democratic Transition this time presented a new dimension to this document.

A committee consisted of representatives of the political parties who sign the Code as well as CDT representatives – chaired by the National Democratic Institute from Washington – would monitor the implementation of the Code during the pre-election competition.

We believe that the political parties sign this document in a period of the high political tensions, which are incited by the appearance of vulgar and insulting graffiti and by an inappropriate statement of the President of Republic in Pluzine. And yet, we are encouraged by the efforts of the Municipal Board of DPS Budva, which invited "all participants of the political scene of the town to engage in a cultured dialogue".

These and similar examples confirm a justification for the existence of the Code. We believe that the parties, after 12 years of a multi-party system, should get the trust of the citizens with a good party program and solutions that can pull the country out of the difficult economic situation. We hope that after the signing of the Code, party signatories and their activists would stop with unacceptable aspects of the campaign and, therefore, contribute to the creation of circumstances for conducting fair and democratic elections.

Finally, we would like to note again that the parties have not abided by provisions in the Law on Financing of Political Parties. The Law says "the parties who have MPs in the Parliament will sign a special agreement that will provide for the observance of the limitations of the expenses of the election propaganda within 15 days from the day of calling the election."

By implementing the Code and realizing the project of election monitoring by the citizen, the Center will do everything it can so that this election is one more step for Montenegro toward the democratic values and societies of developed world.

Podgorica, 20 September 2002