



PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE DOMESTIC OBSERVATIONS OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2005

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Monitors is a union of 8 non-profit organizations: ACAC, AIESD, SDC, and Woman for Global Action, Women Centre Kombinat, KRIIK-Albania, MJAFT and Civic Forum. The Coalition of Domestic Monitors extends its gratitude to all the partner institutions that contributed and supported the successful realization of its mission: the Democracy and Governance in Albania Project; the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Embassy in Tirana, the Albanian-American Chamber of Commerce and the Balkan Trust for Democracy.

The Coalition of Domestic Monitors organized and realized the monitoring of the July 3 Parliamentary Elections by recruiting 3100 domestic monitors, 1700 of which were positioned in polling stations (VCC-s) and 1200 in Zone Election Commissions (ZEC-s).

The Coalitions observation was focused on 40% of the polling stations all around the country and 100 % ZECs and VCCs. The data presented in this preliminary report is statistically sufficient to give a full assessment for the proceedings of the process nationwide as well as to give a view of the vote counting process in general.

This report offers a preliminary summary of the key results drawn from the monitoring of the election process. This report includes the information gathered by election monitors during the process of voting, the ballot transportation, the receiving of the ballot boxes in the ZEC-s and finally the counting process itself.

I. Voting process

I.1 Voters' lists

The voters' lists, which were considered as the main problem of 2003 local elections, were again a major problem in these elections. Although the civil status offices were opened during the Election Day and the courts were also operating in order to give the citizens the chance to be included in the lists, problems still occurred. During the voting process there occurred these deficiencies in the following zones:

- In the Prefecture of Shkodër, in **Zones 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7** there were anomalies related to the citizens' names and their domicile addresses. Some persons occurred in two voting lists or in none at all;
- **Zone 3**, Shkodër, in the lists of the Commune of Balldren, there were over 100 people which went to the ZEC because they could not find their names in the VCC;
- **Zone 7**, Kuçovë in some VCCs;
- **Zone 24**, Krujë, 97 voters could not find their names in the voters' list in VCC 1298, 1297 and 1290;
- In the village of Boboshticë, VCC 3709, one person was registered twice and 5 others were not registered at all. There were also 5 cases where dead persons were registered in the lists and also 2 cases where people from another village were registered in this VCC;
- **Zone 28**, Durrës, 15 persons could not find their names in the lists;
- **Zone 46, 47** Tiranë, Irregularities in the lists occurred in some voting centers;
- **Zone 48**, Kavajë, in most of the VCCs there were approximately 3-4 cases of persons who could not find their names in the lists and were not allowed to vote, while in VCC 2186 there were 17 such cases;
- **Zone 52, 53, 54** Elbasan in some VCCs;
- **Zone 59**, Elbasan there were 25 unregistered persons in the urban areas;
- **Zone 78**, Korçë in some VCC-s;
- **Zone 80 & 81**, in VCC 3697 15 voters were not included in the list;
- **Zone 89**, Përmet, around 20 - 25 persons were not registered;
- **Zone 90**, Gjirokastër: VCC 4238, 4238/1, 4239/1 there were identified 50 cases as above;
- **Zone 95**, Vlorë, VCC 278 had problem with voters' list.

Some of the citizens had their names in the preliminary lists and they were even notified by the local government unit authorities, but in the final lists their names were missing:

- **Zone 89**, Përmet, VCC 4176 a family of three persons was not registered in the list. They had seen their name some days before and were also given a piece of paper informing them about their number in the voters' list.

Another problem was the mismatch of data in the list of citizens' generalities, which gave rise to conflicts among voters and commissioners:

- **Zone 14**, Lezhë there were cases of names missing in the lists or cases when names were spelled incorrectly;
- **Zone 38**, Tiranë in some VCCs;
- **Zone 42**, Tiranë, VCC 1900.

I.2 Location and structure of VCCs

Overall the VCCs were located in venues that were in compliance with the legal norms. Yet, regardless of the criteria defined by law, related to the location and the

conditions to be fulfilled by the VCC-s, there occurred cases when the VCCs were quite inappropriate and not at all functional.

- **Zone 23**, Durrës, VCCC 1276 and 1281;
- **Zone 24**, Durrës, VCC 2874, 2875, 2876, 2877, 2880 and 2884;
- **Zone 48**, VCC 2171 and 2195 were situated in very small rooms thus creating long queues of people waiting to vote;
- **Zone 62 and 63**, Lushnjë, VCC venue had dimensions of 3x3 or 3x4m thus not allowing for proper functioning and encroaching on the secrecy of the voting booth;
- **Zone 89**, Përmet, VCC of village Lipe did not start the voting process because the venue was very small and inappropriate. Only after 3 hours was it possible to start the process in another privately owned location.

I.3 The opening and closing of the VCC-s

Overall, the VCCs opened at 07.00 according to the time defined in the Electoral Code and closed around 19.00. Nevertheless there were VCCs that opened late because of technical issues such as: not receiving the materials in time, malfunctioning of the ultraviolet bulb or problems caused by the commissioners themselves. There were even VCCs where the voting process did not take place at all.

- **Zone 14**, Rubik, there were 2 VCCs that changed the commissioners in the morning of July 3 which delayed the process for 2 hours;
- **Zones 16 and 17**, Laç, there were VCCs that opened late because some of the members of the commissions were absent or there were disagreements amongst them;
- **Zone 26**, Durrës, that was located in the Palace of Culture in Shijak, the voting process started at about 10.00 o'clock, because of the disagreements between party observers and the members of the VCC;
- **Zone 32**, Tiranë VCC 1927, the process was delayed because the voting list was not complete. This created long queues of people for over an hour. People had been present at the VCC since 07.00 o'clock;
- **Zone 38**, Tiranë: most of the VCCs because of technical issues, opened 15 to 30 minutes late;
- **Zone 53**, Elbasan: some VCCs started their operations 40 minutes late because of the malfunctioning of the ultraviolet bulbs;
- **Zone 61**, Librazhd, experienced the same problem;
- **Zone 80**, Korçë: VCC 3658 started its work late because of the absence of the HRUP member of the commission, which was substituted at 08.30.
- **Zone 90**, in the VCCs of Pogon, Anë-Vjosë, Hllomo, Skore the voting process started late due to the lack of materials.

The low level of professionalism on the part of commissioners brought about delays in starting the voting process in: VCC 1533, VCC 1537 and VCC 2112 of Zone 47. There were also VCCs that started the process without the full presence of the members of the commission as in VCC 2882 and VCC 2864 of Zones 62 and 63 in

Lushnjë. These centers operated in this way until 11.30 when all the missing members of the commission were replaced.

Notes were kept even for those polling stations that did not function on July 3.

- **Zone 8**, Shkodra, in polling stations 0189 and 0192, the voting process did not take place for still unclear reasons;
- **Zone 41**, Tirana, the polling station within the Maternity Hospital was not opened because the electoral materials were not handed out.

As far as closing of polling stations is concerned, a lot of them were closed after 19.00, because of long queues of people still waiting outside the stations to cast their ballot. Another reason was because the work in the registration offices issuing birth certificates for the voters was slow. Some VCCs continued their work until even 23.30:

- **Zone 34**, Tirana, polling stations 1873, 1868, 1857 & 1881;
- **Zone 36**, Tirana, polling stations 1803 & 1813;
- **Zone 38**, Tirana;
- **Zone 41**, Tirana;
- **Zone 91**, Gjirokastra.

During the closing process, many of the Commissions of the Polling Stations showed a lack of professionalism in preparing the closing materials and the accompanying documents, causing delays in sending the ballot boxes to the ZECs and at the same time delays in the beginning of the counting process.

I.4 Voters turn out

Commissioners and voters attitudes in the polling station were in compliance with the Electoral Code. However there were noticed some cases of slight irregularities.

I.4-1 Identification documents

Based on the Electoral Code, voters could vote when showing their passport, identification document or birth certificate with a photo. When the 15000 birth certificates were declared missing days before Election Day, the Central Election Commission issued a rule saying that voters who would show their birth certificates, should also present another identification document. The birth certificates were to be gathered by the VCCs and sent to the ZECs together with the ballot box documents.

Meanwhile, based on a rule issued by the Ministry of Local Government on birth certificates, the certificates to be valid were to have been issued no later than three months before the Election Day. Many of the commissioners and the voters were not informed of this, thus causing confusion to the citizens and the commissioners while the registry offices remained opened all day on July 3.

Regarding the use of birth certificate, it was noted that:

- **Zone 31**, Tirana, polling station 1961, two persons were caught voting with false birth certificates. This was written down on the report and the prosecution was informed of this incident;
- **Zone 32**, Tirana, polling station 1930, the numbers of the birth certificates were not recorded and this created confusion and debates among the commissioners. Once CEC was informed a report was written and signed;
- **Zone 36**, Tirana, people voted with old birth certificates;
- **Zone 37**, Tirana, voters were allowed to vote with birth certificates issued in 2003, without photos or seals and the certificates were not kept by the commission;
- **Zone 80-81**, Korca, lots of problems with the identification documents, such as cases of suspicious photos or seals on certificates;
- **Zone 85**, Korca; in some polling stations identification documents were different and the commissioners did not control them;
- **Zone 88**, Erseke, in polling stations 4100, 4101, 4102 and 4103 in Mollaj Commune voters voted with certificates but did not leave the certificates with the commissioners.

There have been cases of voters voting without any identification documents on the basis that the commissioners knew them. This happened mainly in the rural areas.

- **Zone 8**, Shkodra, there were cases of people voting without identification documents on the basis that there were know by the commissioners, as well as cases when the commissioners did not keep the certificates of those voters that voted with birth certificates;
- **Zone 40**, Tirana, in polling station 1999, one citizen was allowed to vote despite the fact that her name was not on the voter's lists on the basis that the commission chair knew her personally;
- **Zone 53**, Elbasan, polling station 2327, the commissioners voted in these polling stations even though they were not registered at this station;
- **Zone 82**, Korca, in polling stations 3826 and 3827 of Vashtmi, a considerable number of people voted without passports or certificates, as a result of a deal among the commissioners to let vote as many people as possible pretending that the village was small and everybody knew everybody. Two observers contested it and the problem was resolved during the second part of the Election Day.

I.4-2 Ink marking of the voters

Some VCCs did not pay any importance to the voters ink marking. There were some VCCs where the ink was not good - Zone 8 in Shkodra and Zone 46 in Tirana.

I.5 Voting process

In the following section is a summary of some of the irregularities noted during the voting process.

I.5-1 Repeated voting

Voting of more than once from one person or for persons not present was noted in the following polling stations:

- **Zone 47**, Tirana, polling station 2090, there were ten cases of a person voting for another person not present;
- **Zone 81**, Korca, polling station 3684, one person had four ballot papers pretending that he was voting for the whole family, while his relatives voted after him;
- **Zone 88**, Erseka, a large number of people tried to vote more than once or for their relatives.

I.5-2 Group voting

The group voting was noted in a considerable number of polling stations. This phenomenon was accompanied by the full agreement of the commissioners of the polling stations, especially regarding the family voting and there were rare cases when the commissioners noted this down. There have been cases when commissioners or political party monitors accompanied people to vote more than once in the secret room and none of these cases have been recorded down as stated by the law. This phenomenon was noted in:

- **Zone 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**, in Shkodra;
- **Zone 24**, Durres, in polling station 1306 and 1307;
- **Zone 28**, Durres, more than ten cases in the polling station in “Demokracia” school and in the polling stations in “Naim Frasheri” school;
- **Zone 37**, Tirana, in polling station 1768, family voting was allowed from the commission on the basis that people had problems with their sight;
- **Zone 39, 46, 47 and 48** in Tirana;
- **Zone 62**, Fier;
- **Zone 80, 81**, Korca, 15 cases;
- **Zone 82**, Libanik village, in polling stations 1154 and 121;
- **Lac**, in some of the polling stations;
- **Diber**, in some of the polling stations;
- **Polling station 2811** in Dushk;
- **Polling station 2196**, Kavaja, 20 cases;
- **Polling station 170**, Pacram.

In polling station 1987/1, Zone 40 in Tirana, one of the commissioners stood very close to the ballot box and interfered thus confronting in five separate cases with voters and observers.

I.5-3 Pressures and influence against voters

Overall there were not noted many cases of influencing the voters or exerting pressure to vote for one or the other candidate. However there were cases when party militants from the two main parties were involved in the propaganda outside the polling stations. There were cases when party poll watchers within the commissions oriented the voters for whom to vote. At the same time, there were cases when the members of the

polling stations did not take measures to remove the candidates' posters or electoral propaganda within the distance prescribed by law. Such cases were noted in:

- **Zone 16 and 17**, Lezhe;
- **Zone 37, 39, 40**, Tirana;
- **Zone 94**, Vlora;
- **VCC 0878 and 0879** in Milot;
- **VCC 0849**, the military base in Lac, there were clear calls to vote for one political subject.

I.6 Professionalism and attitude of commissioners in the polling stations

In general, the situation among the commissioners was calm and no obvious biased was observed. However small cases of incidents were noted:

- **Zone 8**, Shkodra, the voting process was blocked for one hour as a result of conflicts among representatives of the commission;
- **Zone 13**, Lezha, polling station in Ishull Lezhe, the voting process was blocked for two hours because the lack of ballot papers. Once the ZEC was informed the problem was solved;
- **Zone 32**, Tirana, polling station 1923 (Kopshti 19), the voting process was blocked twice. Around 15.00 to 15.45, as a result of debates among commission members, while SDP commissioner left the commission. The process was blocked for ninety minutes;
- **Zone 41**, Tirana, polling station "Uzina Traktor", at 13.30 there was a conflict among the commissioners on whether to allow voters to vote with certificates;
- **Zone 59**, Gramsh, polling station 2656, there was noted a tense situation as a result of disagreements among commissioners. Once ZEC intermediated the situation got normal;
- **Zone 78**, Berat, polling station 3983, a conflict degenerated into violence among commissioners of DP, SP and RP;
- **Zone 81**, Korca, polling station 3698, one person got some ballot papers from the ballot box of the political parties saying that they were cast into the wrong box;
- **Zone 88**, Erseka, polling station 3748, there was disagreement because one of the commissioners signed some ballot papers. The voting process in this polling station was interrupted for three hours and restarted after ZEC intervened;
- **Zone 90**, Gjirokastra, polling station 4250, the voting process was canceled for 45 minutes due to debates among commissioners on publicity not being removed from the polling station;
- **Zone 93**, Gjirokastra, Jorgucat, commissioners from SP and HRUP were involved in fighting. The same was noted in Hllomo between DP and SP commissioners;
- **VCC 4054**, Mollas commune, Milec village, and the voting process was boycotted for five hours, and started after ZEC intervened.

II. Counting process

Monitors were present in all ZEC and in general they were allowed to fulfil their mission. However their positioning, around 3-4 meters away from the counting tables,

and the presence of a lot of unauthorised people in that area, as well as the low professionalism of counting groups/members, made the monitoring process difficult.

II.1 Material receiving from ZEC

Overall the process of delivering polling station materials in ZEC was in compliance with the law. Delays in the arrival of ballot boxes caused delays in receiving election materials and consequently in the start of the counting process. Polling station materials were delivered to ZEC in the presence of all commissioners and police forces. However, even during this phase, there were some irregularities in building up the receiving team:

- **Zone 6**, Shkoder, a police officer drove the car with the voting station materials;
- **Zone 10**, Tropoja, the ZEC delayed the delivering process that resulted in inefficient functioning of the counting groups. They did not coordinate the work with the police for the normalization of the process;
- **Zone 59**, Gramsh, during the delivering process the ZEC set aside 11 out of 96 ballot boxes due to irregularities. At the end of the counting process the commission double checked the boxes and decided to open and count four from these boxes, while other seven were sent to CEC for decision;
- **Zone 62**, Fier, when the polling station materials arrived the ZEC had not set up the counting groups yet, creating tension in the ZEC;
- **Zone 72**, Libofshe, the delivering process ended at 23.00, and the commission received 42 from 43 ballot boxes, except for the ballot box of Kallm village that was not accompanied by the record book.

In zone 6, 8 and 62, monitors were not allowed to be present in the delivering process from the commission chairman. The issue was solved after the intervention from CEC.

II.2 Position and structure of the counting groups

Overall, the position and structure of the counting groups was in compliance with the law. As far as the transparency of the counting process, the distance from the counting table and the large number of people within the area where the monitors were standing made it difficult for the observers to effectively monitor the process.

II.3 The presence of monitors and other people

Monitors noted a large number of people representing different organizations, political subjects and candidates. However, a number of unauthorized people were permitted to enter who were mainly party militants.

- **Zone 33**, Tirana, unauthorized persons were present in the observing area;
- **Zone 36**, Tirana, DP observers were present within the counting zone, as well as other unauthorized people;
- **Zone 39**, Tirana, unauthorized people entered ZEC;
- **Zone 47**, Tirana, unauthorized people insulted counting group members and monitors;

- **Zone 62**, Dushk, there 4-10 unauthorized people;
- **Zone 64, Fier**, DP candidate entered the counting area to communicate with the ZEC secretary and counting group/members;
- **Zone 85, Korce**, three cases of unauthorized people within the counting area was noticed and the police force intervened to normalize the situation.

Despite the fact that at ZECs there were placed posters, which said that cell phones were strictly forbidden, this rule was not respected by any ZEC or BCC. The members of the ZEC and VCC were also communicating via cell phone as in Zones 36,33, 34.

II.4 Counting

II. 4-1 The beginning and the ending of the counting process

We observed that the counting process progressed calmly. Nevertheless there were some problems on the part of the vote counting groups:

- **Zone 14**, the counting process was delayed for 3 hours because the last 2 ballot boxes from VCC 0895 and 0896 arrived at about 01.00 am of July 4;
- **Zone 5**, Shkodër, at the end of the process the Deputy Chair of the ZEC refused to sign the minutes and offended one of the monitors present. He agreed to sign it only after some hours thus causing delay;
- **Zone 37**, Tiranë, the vote counting process was terminated later than the foreseen official time, exactly on July 5, 2005 at 23.00, this because of long interruptions due to commissioners being overworked as well as an accident which occurred to the chairman of the commission;
- **Zone 49**, Durrës, the minutes were not prepared at the end of the counting process even though they should have been prepared by 13.45 of July 4. It was actually concluded on July 5 with the excuse that the summary table was not ready yet;
- **Zone 70**, Cakran: there was a technical problem in preparing the minutes for the candidate. In this case CEC sent another set of minutes and explains why the final results were published the following day.

II. 4-2 The irregularities observed.

The following irregularities were observed during the vote counting process in the VCCs:

II. 4-2-1 Shortages and irregularities a the election materials

- **Zone 6**, Shkoder, at VCC 221 there was a lack of two seals at the ballot box but after the unanimous decision of ZEC the counting process continued;
- **Zone 22**, Diber, VCC 1151, in the voters' list there were no numbers of identification cards for a significant number of voters. At VCC 1147 and 1219 the seal of the VCC Chairman as well as the seal of the VCC were found out of the election materials box. At VCC 1233 the unused ballot papers were not found at the election material box. At VCC 1246 the ballot papers were improperly sealed.

- At VCC 1257, 1231 and 1194 ballot papers were missing as compared to the protocol held at the voting center;
- **Zone 33**, Tirana, at VCC 1892 a torn protocol was noticed and they asked for its replacement with a new one. The protocol book was considered invalid and all the election commissioners signed the new one. When it came to signing the counted envelopes, the SP representative refused to sign, as according to them there were people who had voted with false birth certificates and this caused the interruption of the counting process. At the VCC 1982 the protocol book was torn because the final results for all the parties were put in the same place so a new protocol book was prepared;
 - **Zone 36**, Tirana, at VCC 1794 was considered irregular because one of the security codes was not in conformity with the submitted protocol book;
 - **Zone 38**, Tirana, it was noticed that a seal was missing but the ZEC based on a consensus continued the counting process;
 - **Zone 47**, Tirana, at 6 voting centers there were irregularities with seal codes of the ballot boxes. At VCC 1534, 1532 and 2096 the election material box was irregular. At VCC 2111, 1532 and 2092 the Chairman's seal was found out of the box and at VCC 1529 the cover of the proportional ballot box was loose;
 - **Zone 53**, Elbasan, old birth certificates without photos were found in a ballot box which caused the temporary suspension of the election process;
 - **Zone 56**, Elbasan, the voters' list was missing in a ballot box and consequently the box was not accepted by the election commission;
 - **Zone 62 and 63**, Lushnje and Dushk, at VCC 2851, the seal was out of the box and it was documented at the protocol book, while at the VCC 2818 the closing protocol and the security code numbers were missing;
 - **Zone 62 and 63**, Lushnje at VCC 2861, 2884 and 2868 there was a discrepancy between the ballot papers, proportional ballot papers and the protocol book;
 - **Zone 64, Fier**, at VCC 2918 there were 16 ballot papers missing, therefore the ballot box was considered invalid. At VCC 2897 there were more ballot papers than the figure written in the protocol book, therefore the ballot box was considered invalid;
 - **Zone 84, Korçe**, at VCC 3909, 3792 and 3918, the ballot boxes were considered invalid because the seals were found out of the election material box. At VCC 3867, the number of the voters who had voted didn't match with the number in the protocol book. The candidate ballot boxes were not properly sealed as well. 8 ballot boxes had problems with election materials;
 - **Zone 88**, Erseke VCC 3843 submitted documents filled in breach of the electoral code. There were 38 ballot papers in the ballot box but the voters' list didn't have the signatures of the voters, therefore on the consensus the counting was considered invalid. At zone 38, Erseke, VCC 3841, the ballot papers were in the box together with the ballot counterfoils, but in consensus among the counting group members, this ballot box was considered valid;
 - **Zone 89**, Permet, it was noticed that 2 – 4 ballot boxes were put aside as irregular.
 - **Zone 90**, Gjirokaster. There were problems in two voting centers. Unused ballot papers were missing. The CEC issued an order by fax to the ZEC to start counting which postponed the process for 12 hours. Once the ZEC ordered the starting of the process for the ballot box No. 4245 they noticed that the third security code was missing (the back up one) as well as the lack of registration of

- the security codes at the protocol book at the beginning of the election process was missing too. This ballot box was presented at the ballot counting center from representatives of one party, the process for deciding on the validity of this box lasted 10 hours. While the second ballot box was considered irregular but it was counted based on decision of the ZEC and was taken into consideration for the final results;
- **Zone 95**, Vlore, The counting process of the ballot box No 4473 was blocked because 31 ballot papers were missing. After having the ZEC decision, the counting process was delayed for 2 hours and it was concluded that the mistake was made at the VCC;
 - **Zone 100**, Sarande. There were noticed cases when voting was not documented at the voters' lists.

II. 4-2-2 Cases of the invalid votes

- **Zone 56**, Elbasan, there were more ballot papers than voters at a ballot box;
- **Zone 70**, Cakran from 12158 votes, 258 were considered invalid;
- **Zone 72**, Libofshe, from 13972 ballot papers found at box, 251 votes were considered invalid. At VCC 3189 there was a counting problem. At VCC 3211 there were 70 ballot papers more than voters which resulted in the ZEC invalidating this ballot box;
- **Zone 82**, Korce, there were ballot papers in excess at a ballot box and the process was interrupted until the chairman of the ZEC arrived. There were disagreements which ended up in quarrels but the counting process continued after coming up with a written decision;
- **Zone 88**, Erseke at VCC 3748 Commune Voskopoje, the voters' figure was 135 but in the box were found 160 ballots. This box was considered irregular by the ZEC and this box was not counted in the final result;
- **Zone 89**, Permet, at VCC 4175 it was noticed that 70 ballot papers were marked with ink. The VCC compiled a protocol and considered them invalid;
- **Zone 100**, Sarande, there were over 15 ballot papers more than the number of the voters in the list at the voting center at Rumanxat village.

II. 4-2-3 Cases of folded ballot papers

- **Zone 72**, Libofshe, in VCC 3211 in the parties' ballot box were found handfuls of ballot papers folded together, as well as ballot papers that belonged to the candidates' ballot box and as a result this box was declared invalid;
- **Zone 82**, Korça, in one box we found seven ballot papers folded together.

II. 4-3 Attitude and professionalism of the counting-group members

In general there was a low professionalism among the counting group members. Some of them had not received the relevant CEC training because many were engaged in the VCCs. In addition, the non-professional venues and the prolongation of the process made them tired thus affecting the accuracy of the process.

II. 4-3-1 Abandoning the counting centre before the counting was over

- **Zone 7**, Shkoder, with 2 voting centers yet to be completed the commission has declared the results. There had also been numerous movements of the count-groups in and out, contacts with unknown persons outside the venue;
- **Zone 36**, Tirane, Almost all the counters moved out of the counting centre and resumed their work after several hours before the process was finished, they communicated with the observers or other persons;
- **Zone 43** Kamez, there was an interruption of the counting process, because of the departure of the socialist commissioners who came back after a delay of 2 hours;
- **Zone 48**, Kavaje, on the desk of the commission Nr 2 there was a disagreement by a SP member of the commission about a ballot paper. He abandoned the commission of the counting centre at 0200;
- **Zone 55**, Elbasan, some commissioner's left the process thus blocking the process.
- **Zone 96**, Vlora, The SP withdrew its ZEC members with 5 ballot boxes still remaining to be counted.

II. 4-3-2 - Bias on the counting of the proportional votes

- **Zone 7**, Shkoder, votes have been transferred in a preferential way to the candidate or to the party;
- **Zone 12**, Kukes, it was noted that in the counting groups there were commissioners of political parties who often hindered the progress of the count;
- **Zone 16 and 17**, Lezhe, during the counting of party votes a tendency to carry out an *apriori* distribution of the smaller party votes was noted;
- **Zone 56**, Belsh, was made an erroneous calculation of results. After the intervention of the observers, a recount was carried out and it resulted in an error of 11 votes;
- **Zone 89**, Permet, in a desk were found more that 7 ballot papers belonging to SMI party. They were inserted in the piles of the SDP and HRUP.

II. 4-4 Unauthorized persons interfered with the count-group members and with the members of the zonal electoral commissions.

- **Zone 16 and 17**, Laç, unauthorized persons frequently entered in and out of the area during the process intervening or exerting pressure – such as the Mayor and the Chair of Region;
- **Zone 39**, Tirana, The SP observer entered the area and intervened during the counting process;
- **Zone 62 and 63**, Lushnje and Dushk, there were interventions of the DP, SP and SMI militants in the ZECs. The police intervened and escorted these people out.

III General climate and situation

III-1 Incidents outside the counting centers

- **Zone 25**, Durres, a militant of SP provoked DP militants near a VCC. A confrontation between them was noted and later the police intervened;

- **Zone 37**, Tirana, in the VCC 1796 there was an incident caused by the bickering of an unauthorized person that entered the VCC and attacked a member of commission. The situation deteriorated and a RP representative was dead;
- **Zone 34**, in VCC 1859 in some cases there were irregularities in the voting procedures but the voting process was not interrupted. Outside the voting centre an SP activist was accused by the DP one for making propaganda to the voters as well as for having acquired the lists of the people that have voted;
- **Zone 39**, Tirana, in the afternoon hours near the school “Mihal Grameno” and the Kinder-garden ‘18” there was arguing between SP and DP supporters. There was a display of guns but the situation was quickly normalized;
- **Zone 62 and 63**, Lushnje, an incident took place in VCCs 2875 and 2876. The SP observer and two other citizens hit each other without any obvious reason. It was noticed that some activists in VCC 2884 and 2862 pushed the citizens to vote following their own preferences. In Zone 62 some SMI observers led the voters to the voting booths whereas the commissioners didn’t interfere to stop it;
- **Zone 79**, Skrapar, Militants of SMI and SP quarreled with each other and it was only after the interference of the Mayor that the situation was calmed;
- **Zone 90**, Gjirokaster, The voting process was blocked for fifty minutes in VCC 4247 and VCC 4247/1 due to an incident where A local DP official was attacked;
- **Zone 93**, Vlore, An incident took place near the ZEC after voting was over. The SMI commissioner was attacked by a group who later identified by the police.

III- 2 The police forces

The police maintained a correct attitude in compliance with the law and no interferences in the ZEC or VCC were noticed. Their presence outside the polling stations was limited and they behaved professionally. They helped to secure a quiet and safe atmosphere. However, there were some cases when the police forces interfered:

- **Zone 89**, Permet, in VCC 4172 voters were overcrowded. The VCC chairman asked for the help of the police to keep the crowd away. The police interfered because one voter attacked the ZEC Deputy Chairman of ZEC Nr: 13 who was sent by the commission to solve the problem of missing voting ballots;
- **Zone 26**, Durres, The presence of local police chiefs was evident. The situation went back to normal only after the interference of the President of the Republic;
- **Zone 33**, Tirane, The presence of the police was noticed inside VCCs.

We consider the election process as a further development to meet the international standards making thus a step forward in the aspiration of the Albanians towards the European Integration. This conclusion is based on our observation from all over the country as well as considering the way in which the election code was applied by the CEC, ZEC and VCC. However during the process we noticed some deficiencies, which, though limited, affected the quality of the process but by no means affected the will of Albanian voters. It is the responsibility of the Albanian political parties as well as election administration bodies to take all the necessary measures to improve all the deficiencies noticed to make sure that in the future the process meets European standards.

Tirana, July 13, 2005