

**Report On The
2nd Budapest Human Rights Forum, 2009**

**Budapest, MFA, Conference Hall
25 – 26 June 2009**

SUMMARY

The **Second Budapest Human Rights Forum** was held in Budapest on 25-26 June 2009, where on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Western borders of Hungary the participants addressed the question of freedom of movement and migration. There was also a lively discussion on the Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union towards Eastern Europe and on the election observation activity carried out by international organizations. The feasibility study on the Budapest Centre on the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities was introduced and discussed by the Forum.

In their **video messages** sent to the Forum, the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, H.E. **Javier Solana** as well as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, H.E. **Navanethem Pillay** expressed their strong commitment to and support for the mission of the Forum and the Hungarian initiative on the possible establishment of the Budapest Centre on the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. **Foreign Minister H. E. Péter Balázs** in his speech also underlined that the Hungarian Government was ready to promote the creation of an independent and credible Centre in Budapest.

The **first panel** focused on the prevention of genocide. **István Lakatos**, Hungarian Human Rights Ambassador, **Enzo Maria Le Fevre Cervini**, Special Adviser of the Hungarian MFA informed the participants on the details and results of the feasibility study. Professor **David Hamburg** President of the UN SG's Advisory Committee on Genocide Prevention strongly supported the establishment of the Centre in Budapest since genocide prevention needs to be further institutionalized. **Valéry Rochet**, special adviser of the Office of the UN SG's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide underlined that it was essential to ensure the cooperation of Governments, because preventing genocide was the responsibility of States.

The subject of the **second panel** was the human rights aspects of the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union. Relevant NGO representatives reviewed the short history and difficulties of their countries and stressed their deep concern about the human rights situation. **Gabriella Dloucha** on behalf of Czech EU Presidency considered the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy as a useful tool aiming at providing new input for the EU's strategic outlook towards its Eastern neighbours. **Darja Bevdaz Kuret** on behalf of the Slovenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe reviewed the Council of Europe's activity towards the members of the Eastern Partnership.

The **third panel** of the Forum was dedicated to the freedom of movement with special emphasis on the challenges of migration. **Günter Nooke** human rights representative of the German MFA gave a short historical overview about the European situation after the political, economic and social changes of the 90s. He expressed his gratitude to Hungary for opening the western borders of the country in 1989. **Gottfried Koefner** on behalf of the UNHCR, **Argentina Szabados** on behalf of the IOM outlined that migration management systems must ensure full respect for human rights. **Krisztina Berta** director-general of the Hungarian MFA presented a complex review on the EU migration policy. She focused on the challenges and the political framework of the European asylum, migration and integration policies.

The **fourth panel** focused on the right to free and fair elections. Representatives of various international organisations, **Janez Lenarcic** (Director of OSCE/ODIHR), **Zsolt Bártfai** (expert of the European Commission), **J. Ray Kennedy** (expert of the UN) emphasized the importance of follow up activities of the election observation missions. **Éva Császár** on behalf of the Hungarian MFA emphasized that the fall of the iron curtain was a crucial element on the way of democratisation of Central and Eastern Europe. The Hungarian focal point for election observations provided information on the selection mechanism and future training projects of the country. **Anna Sólyom**, project Manager of the ACEEEO noted that that the

objectives of the NGO were to promote open and transparent elections through exchange of information, experience on election laws and procedures and technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Second Budapest Human Rights Forum, was held in Budapest on 25-26 June 2009, where participants addressed four important human rights questions:

1. International prevention of genocide,
2. Freedom of movement, migration,
3. Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union towards Eastern Europe,
4. Democratisation, election observation.

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was opened by *Senior State Secretary Vilmos Szabó* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He welcomed the participants and recalled that in 1989 Hungary had significantly contributed to the collapse of the Communist regime by literally dismantling the Iron Curtain and had acted as a major driving force to pave the way for democracy, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region, for the re-unification of Europe. The Government of Hungary was fully convinced that the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities as extreme human rights abuses should be one of the top priorities for the international community. He added that Hungary was fully committed to the notion of genocide prevention and was ready to contribute in a rather tangible manner to the efforts of the international community in this context. He also highlighted the importance of the Eastern Partnership initiative adopted by the European Council in December 2008. One of the priorities of the Eastern Partnership strategy would be to step up efforts in the field of democracy and rule of law that would certainly have impacts on the issues of human rights as well. Even though Hungary itself was going through tough economic reforms, we would remain committed to providing the necessary assistance and support for their efforts in the domain of democratization including human rights matters.

Furthermore, he noted that, one of the principal indicators that a State embarks on the long way of democratic transition is holding democratic elections. International organizations provided support for the preparation and conduct of fair and democratic elections and deployed Observation Missions to enhance transparency and settle the possible electoral disputes in a peaceful manner.

III. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

In their video messages sent to the Forum, *the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy H.E. Javier Solana* as well as *the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights H.E. Navanethem Pillay* expressed their strong commitment to and support for the mission of the Forum and the Hungarian initiative to establish the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.

Javier Solana stressed that *in order to prevent genocide, the international community must have the political will to intervene*. He added: *“To do that, we need two things: First, we need a dedicated group of experts, pooling their knowledge and skills, to closely monitor situations around the world where there is a risk of genocide. Secondly, that group of experts must be close to the decision-makers in the international organization. It must be close enough to feed, in real time, the decision making process. It must be close enough for the member states of that organization to feel that they have ownership of it.”*

Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for human rights, supported the idea to set up an "early-warning" centre in Budapest that would identify potential genocide anywhere in the world. She said the Center could intensify cooperation among governments, international organizations and civil groups.

Foreign Minister Péter Balázs in his speech – delivered on the first day of the Forum – emphasized that Hungary had always treated the protection and promotion of human rights as a priority. He underlined that the Hungarian Government was ready to promote the creation of an independent and credible Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, since its reason of existence is unquestionable. Furthermore he announced the possible subjects of the 3rd Budapest Human Rights Forum: they would be the review of the work of the UN Human Rights Council and the introduction of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities which was to be established in the course of 2010.

IV. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The panel discussions were followed by interactive debates.

The **first panel** focused on the prevention of genocide since during the First Budapest Human Rights Forum Hungary undertook to prepare a feasibility study on the establishment of an International Centre for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities.

Istvan Lakatos, Hungarian human rights ambassador, advocated Budapest as the venue for the genocide prevention center, stating that it could receive support from international relief and charity organizations already active in the Hungarian capital. Hungary had not had a history as a colonial power and could be acceptable to African, Asian and Latin American countries. He emphasized that minority protection had been one of the key priorities of the Hungarian foreign policy; therefore it would be obvious that the Hungarian diplomacy could not remain silent when in other parts of the world the pure existence of minorities would be in danger. He stressed that the Centre could have a very positive effect on the whole region, by disseminating the culture of dialogue and conflict prevention. The International Centre for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities would cost up to 2.5 million Euro annually, a relatively modest sum that should help it to win international support, he said.

In his Statement *Enzo Maria Le Fevre Cervini, Special Adviser of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs* stressed that the idea behind the creation of a Centre was the establishment of a new international mechanism able to bridge the gap between the early warning and the early action. He pointed out that this mechanism would be able to promote and/or coordinate an international network of players and stakeholders, also of regional focal points, closely linked to both global and regional decision making bodies that would be a further requirement for progress towards effective actions. Finally, he emphasized the Centre would - in close cooperation with the concerned regional and sub-regional organizations, NGOs and other stakeholders - elaborate and put tailored and viable options and recommendations at the disposal of the decision-making bodies.

In his remarkable presentation, *Professor David Hamburg* president emeritus at Carnegie Corporation of New York, President of the UN Secretary General's Advisory Committee on Genocide Prevention outlined the evolution of EU-related work on prevention of genocide and growing cooperation between the EU and the UN. He strongly supported the establishment of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities that could be very helpful in mobilizing the necessary knowledge and skills, namely: establishment of an ongoing process, drawing on readily available information from all sources, to identify vulnerable targets, scapegoats, and depreciated out-groups; monitoring

of trends of hatred and dehumanization toward the groups that are identified in such a vulnerable position; offering help in conflict resolution and prevention of mass violence in situations of this kind. Stressing the need for early, strong mediation (as led by Kofi Annan for the African Union in Kenya in 2008), for early ongoing conflict resolution, including essential concepts, e.g. mutual accommodation, techniques (negotiation) and institutions (independent judiciary) help leaders and the public in understanding the merits of early ongoing conflict resolution with international cooperation as appropriate, he expressed that “*Such actions can bring together adversarial groups in achievement of vital shared goals that can only be attained through cooperation.*” He also emphasized that genocide prevention, much like other prevention of mass violence, needed to be further institutionalized, he said.¹

Valéry Rochet, special adviser of the Office of the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Dr. Francis Deng² underlined that it was essential to ensure the cooperation of Governments, because preventing genocide was the responsibility of States. The need of the broader cooperation with non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions and experts on the subject was also highlighted. The importance of raising awareness about the causes of genocide was accentuated. Genocide and related atrocities tended to occur in societies with different national, racial, ethnic or religious groups, locked in identity-related conflicts, fomented by discrimination, hate speech inciting to violence, and other violations of human rights, she said. She drew the attention to the enhancement of the United Nations’ capacity to analyse and manage information critical to assessing risks of genocide or related crimes, the Office would prepare to implement its capacity-development project “*Mainstreaming Principles and Practices on Genocide Prevention*” in 2009 and 2010 which would include training manuals and seminars on genocide prevention for UN substantive staff and peacekeepers, civil society and government institutions and officials. She expressed that from the perspective of the Office of the Special Adviser, the principles of “*Sovereignty as Responsibility*” and “*the Responsibility to Protect*” would depend largely on cooperation with Member States of the U.N.

In his empathized statement **Gregory Stanton** president of the *International Association of Genocide Scholars* underlined that conflict resolution was not the same thing as the prevention of genocide. Among others he pointed to the specific nature of the genocide, as greatest crime of the humanity, as basic violation of human rights, where most of the victims had been murdered by their own government. He urged an international campaign against genocide, a massive movement of the peoples around the world to stop genocide. He brought to notice the financial obstacle, the lack of open sources, need of donors, foundations, connected with major universities.

Heinz Krummenacher - managing director and head of the early warning program *FAST International of Swiss Peace Foundation*³ - emphasized the need for quantitative and qualitative researches on genocide prevention, saying the analyses could not enough, they should be involved in decision making procedures. The elaboration of an effective early

¹ In the end of the first day the participants could follow the projection of a video on interviews of David A. Hamburg on the prevention agenda of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and its legacy of preventing interstate conflict, genocide, and threats to global health.: [A Conversation with David Hamburg: The Commitment to Prevention \(49:32 mins\)](#) (Videos)

² The Special Adviser’s mandate is to collect information on serious human rights and humanitarian law violations that might lead to genocide; act as a mechanism of early warning to the Secretary-General and the Security Council; make recommendations on how to prevent genocide; and collaborate with the UN system on activities for the prevention of genocide.

³ **Swisspeace (1988)** is a practice-oriented peace research institute in the area of conflict analysis and peace building. **Swisspeace carries out** researches on the causes of wars and violent conflicts, develops tools for early recognition of tensions, and formulate conflict mitigation and peace building strategies. **Swisspeace** contributes to information exchange and networking on current issues of peace and security policy through its analyses and reports as well as meetings and conferences. <http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/en/aboutus/index.html>

warning system on an objective base would be needed, he said. He also underlined the role of the NGOs, the necessity of right time, right information and right people's to prevent genocide.

In the course of the interactive debate the representative of Azerbaijan called the attention to the conflict around their border demonstrating against this evolved situation. Ambassador of South Africa shared their experiences of apartheid and brought to notice the danger of the discrimination and the necessity of the genocide prevention. Each speaker on this panel underlined the urgency of early prevention, before deteriorations of the situation, before entering the "slippery slope". Being genocide the "crime of the crimes" a human-made catastrophe, and, as such, it could and should be prevented by the humankind. The speakers emphasized the need for the international community to focus their efforts on conflict prevention rather than conflict management.

The subject of the **second panel** was the human rights aspects of the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union. This partnership will be governed by the principles of differentiation and conditionality, including the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The aim of the Forum was to take into consideration the human rights aspects of the dialogue with the Eastern partners of the European Union namely: with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

In his statement *Vladimir Shkolnikov (Director of Freedom House Europe)* interpreted the point of view of Freedom House about the common feature of the six Eastern partners of the EU. None of them were absolute dictatorships, but they were not democracies, he said. He expressed his scepticism concerning the process of Neighbourhood Policy. He summed up the consequences of the so called "colour revolutions" saying that the style of post-Soviet leaders, and domestic political calculus unfortunately did not change in these countries. He stressed its deep concern about the human rights situation these countries. (i.e. constitutional law, equality before the law, freedom of expression) He remained strongly concerned at the lack of respect for fundamental freedoms while the EU was doing business with these corrupt, not transparent and risky countries. He thought that this kind of business relations could weaken the EU bargaining power and could ultimately weaken the EU position. In his opinion, it had to be avoided that the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy limited itself to "government-to-government discussions". Finally, he highlighted the importance of involvement of the civil society into the process of Eastern Neighbourhood Policy and he expressed his hope that the annual *Nations in Transit* survey of Freedom House could be involved and used in the Eastern Partnership.

Gabriella Dloucha on behalf of Czech EU Presidency considered the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union a very promising cooperation. The EU should use the political dialogue to pursue the Union's interest in peace, security and freedom in this region. The Eastern Partnership aimed at providing a new input for the EU's strategic outlook towards its Eastern neighbours to intensify co-operation in a spirit of true partnership. The Eastern Partnership could set out to strengthen trade, and potentially facilitate travel, between the EU and the six countries involved. The Eastern Partnership could allow these countries to strengthen their bilateral and multilateral relations with the EU on the basis of their common values, i.e. respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, rule of law, good governance and international law.

Darja Bevdaz Kuret (Slovenian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe, ambassador of Slovenia to Budapest) reviewed the Council of Europe's activity towards the members of the EaP. She mentioned that Belarus was the only European country that is not member of the Council of Europe, and according to Amnesty International, it was the only European country that still carries out death penalty. A moratorium on the execution

of prisoners was a precondition for Belarus to receive a Special Guest status in the Council of Europe.

The NGO representatives reviewed the short history and difficulties of their countries, underlining that sufficient level of progress in terms of democracy, the rule of law and human rights that in compliance with international standards should be necessary for deepening relations in framework of EaP. Many speakers including **Frank Orton** (*EU Support Project Georgia*) and **Andriy Kristenko** (Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union) **Nicolas Tavitian** (*Armenians Inside Europe*⁴) and **Olga Stuzhinskaya** (*Office for a democratic Belarus, Brussels*)⁵ found reason to express great concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in the six countries involved in the EaP. These countries face with a multitude of challenges including lack of independence of the judiciary, corruption, political prisoners, protection of the minorities' rights, freedom of the media, weakness of the civil society, the asylum seekers, extradition etc. It has also been reported that circumstances under which the arrest and trial of the political prisoners occurred in these countries were inconsistent with the international standards. The situation in these countries has been very sensitive and fragile. The four proposed policy platforms of EaP; democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; energy security; and contact between people should be adequate ground for the EaP co-operation.

During the debate it was repeatedly reiterated that civil organisations and civil society had an important role to play in the democratisation process of these countries. Some steps have been made but much more needs still to be done.

The **third panel** of the Forum was dedicated to the freedom of movement with special emphasis on the challenges of migration on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the dismantling of the Iron Curtain and the opening of the Western borders of Hungary. This latter political decision taken on the 18th May, 1989 provided an opportunity for the citizens of the former German Democratic Republic to reach the Federal Republic of Germany and therefore paved the way for the reunification process of Germany.

In his statement, **Gottfried Koefner**, *UNHCR Regional Representative for Central Europe* outlined that in the last decades the organisation faced a multitude of challenges including increased globalisation and related population movements. At the same time, the ways in which people were moved had also changed in some respects. He mentioned the new patterns of irregular migration. He stressed that asylum seekers and refugees constituted some of the primary targets of contemporary forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Compliance with the increased freedom of movement within the European Union for instance seems to call for more effective control and management of movements across the external borders, he said. He emphasized that the management of mixed migratory movements required specific measures, but these provisions neither would violate human rights nor fundamental freedoms of refugees. Furthermore, he noted that often refugees were victims of serious human rights abuses for which states had a responsibility. He drew the attention to the danger of negative stigmatization, which had an impact on policies, administrative practices and even on

⁴ **Inside Europe** (IE) is an independent public policy and resource centre dedicated to European affairs relating to Armenia and to the Armenian Diaspora. Its **mission** is to contribute to knowledge and understanding about the relationship between Armenia and the process of European integration as well as the relationship between the Armenian Diaspora and the European institutions. <http://www.insideeurope.org/>

⁵ The Brussels-based Office for a Democratic Belarus is a non-profit organization run by Belarusians living abroad. The Office's task is to strengthen ties between the Belarusian pro-democratic groups, including NGOs, political parties and the Belarusian independent media, and the EU institutions, the Council of Europe, NATO, the United Nations, international human rights groups and international press. <http://www.democraticbelarus.eu/whoarewe>

legislation and could create obstacles not only for the reception of newcomers, but also for the integration of those already accepted. Finally, he concluded indicating that the management of migration phenomena of all kinds needed to be carried out in a protection sensitive manner.

Argentina Szabados (*Regional Representative of International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Mission for Central and Southeastern.*) stressed that migration management systems must ensure full respect for human rights. States had sovereign prerogative to determine conditions of entry and stay of non-nationals, however human rights has to be applied to all migrants, irrespective of their migratory status. She highlighted the four key policy elements, namely: capacity, coherence, awareness and cooperation, saying that protection for human rights was needed at all stages of the migration process. In this process every player had his responsibility including global and regional processes, country of origin, private sector and the communities. While jobs did not follow people, people needed to follow jobs, she said. She was wondering why in general a movie about migrating birds and animals was found lovely, though the migration of people was considered not so acceptable at all.

Günter Nooke (*Human Rights representative, MFA of Germany*) gave a short historical overview about European situation after the political, economic and social changes of the 90s. He expressed his gratitude to Hungary for opening the western borders of the country in 1989, which step contributed to the improvement of the notion of migration. He stressed several measures meant to be applied for the migrants who were victims of many types of discrimination, no matter they were legally or illegally in the country. The migrants who did not submit an application for asylum also had to be received in specific, suitable facilities. Particular attention should be given for greater coordination of national policies for integrating third-country nationals. In conformity with EU basic principles migration and asylum policies had to comply with the norms of international law, particularly with those that concern human rights, human dignity and refugees.

Krisztina Berta (*Head of Consular Department MFA of Hungary*) presented a complex review on the EU migration policy. In her presentation she focused on the challenges and the political framework of the European asylum, migration and integration policies. She followed a global approach from the legal background of migration including the Hague Program, European Pact on Immigration and Asylum and the Stockholm Program, which would be the third in a series of five-year plans setting the agenda for justice and home affairs and security policy in Europe, and it would go into operation when the Hague Program expired at the end of 2009.

During the discussion speakers underlined that any measures, legislation and practices need to pay full attention to the human rights of migrants and of individuals seeking protection/ such as asylum seekers and refugees in accordance with the related international legal instruments for their protection.

The **fourth panel** focused on the right to free and fair elections by discussing the work of the election observation missions of the relevant international organizations. This subject was in correlation with the previous one, since the opening of our borders was an important step towards democratisation, rule of law and realisation of civil and political rights.

Janez Lenarcic, Director of OSCE/ODIHR emphasized the importance of follow up activities of the election observation missions. The OSCE/ODIHR has a comprehensive approach to election observation, it is not only a one-day event, but a wider, longer process, which includes the observation of voting stations, their opening, voting, closing, counting of the votes as well as the atmosphere, the campaign, the media. He informed the audience on the report of the Office of 2006, under the name of Common responsibility that tries to identify

the trends with regard to the civil and political rights. Mr. Lenarcic said that the cooperation among international organizations is essential therefore it is an important step that in 2005 the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation was endorsed by the African Union, the Organizations of American States, the European Commission, the UN Secretariat and the OSCE/ODIHR.

Zsolt Bártfai, expert of the European Commission emphasized that although, this exercise is very expensive, and the observation takes only a snapshot of how these democratic institutions function and whether human rights work in practice or not, not only the right to free and fair elections but also the freedom of movement and speech, non-discrimination, women's rights and minority's rights come to the front. However, the election observation mission with its technical assistance and democratization plans can only be implemented if the political will exists both on the side of the EU and of the given country. The tasks to be carried out by these missions are the following: supporting the domestic observation; strengthening the capacity of national media; enhancing possibilities of candidates to present themselves; attaining public confidence in election process, because sometimes the public trust better the EU observers than national authorities. He underlines the great importance of the independence of the missions and of the increasing focus on follow-up activities.

J. Ray Kennedy, election observation expert of the United Nations expressed that UN was involved in many election observation activities in the early 1990s but increasingly allowed regional organizations (e.g., OAS, OSCE, AU) to take the lead. United Nations was the venue in 2005 for the signature of a statement of "Principles of International Election Observation" with an accompanying Code of Conduct (23 signatories, including International Organizations (UN, AU, OAS, IPU, IDEA), international observer organizations, European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations). Over the years it had been seen that election observation was covering more and more elements, among which are: the legal framework, the formation and activities of electoral bodies, including transparency of their sessions, voter registration, registration of political parties, nomination of candidates, districting, voter education, human rights (i.e. freedom of speech, assembly, movement), electoral campaigns and recruitment and training of electoral staff.

Éva Császár on behalf of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized the importance of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the iron curtain, which was a crucial element on the way of democratisation of Central and Eastern Europe. Taking into account the history of Hungary it is not surprising that it has very strong intention to provide assistance to other countries of the world in strengthening their democracies and democratic institutions. Through active participation in the election observation missions of different international organizations, i.e. OSCE/ODIHR and EU missions this goal can be achieved. Therefore Hungary is ready to share its experiences in OSCE and also in EU missions worldwide. The Hungarian focal point for election observations provided information on the selection mechanism of the country. It is worth noting that a Board on the basis of the applicants' language, psychological and communicational skills takes the decision on the selection. She also informed the audience that the MFA initiates election observation trainings. As a first step, it plans to organize an international and regional short term observer training at the beginning of October, 2009.

Anna Sólyom, project Manager of the Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO), noted that that the objectives of ACEEEO were to promote open and transparent elections through exchange of information, experience on election laws and procedures, election technology, voters' information and education. The ACEEEO encouraged short/long-term trainings of election administrators and international observers and promoted the idea of politically independent and non-partisan election management bodies and administrators. Concerning the Election Observation Missions the main objective was to be impartial and to

be able to help politically isolated countries. She stressed that the Election Observation Mission's highest significance was notable during the transitional period of a country by the stabilization of the democratic institutions. When this first period closed, EOMs reached another level: the aim was to sustain the professional election standards and to foster the capacity development of the electoral monitoring bodies. She also noted the initiative of Global Election's Day (GED), the celebration of fair elections on the first Thursday of February since 2006. Finally, she invited all the participants to the 18th ACEEEO Annual Conference, to be held on 3-5 September, 2009 in Yerevan, Armenia.

During the **debate** Mr. Lenarcic and Mr. Bártfai explained the importance of the communication of the results of elections and of the conclusion of observation missions emphasizing that it is difficult to find a clear and simple message of all the missions and summarize it only in one sentence the media can cite. With regard to the cooperation among international organizations Ms. Sólyom underlined that a global conference organized by active NGOs in this field can be a great occasion for changing experiences and ideas, setting up follow-up activities.

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