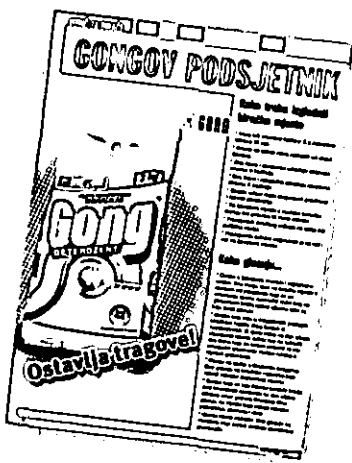


Date Printed: 04/09/2009

JTS Box Number: IFES_62
Tab Number: 112
Document Title: GONG's Campaign
Document Date: 2003
Document Country: Croatia
Document Language: English
IFES ID: CE00552

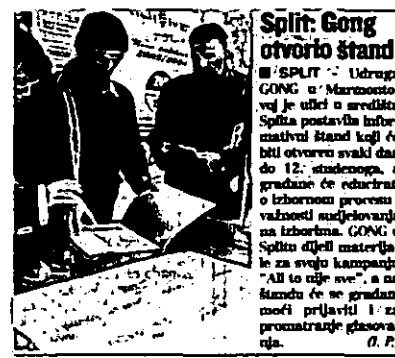


* D 6 0 B 5 1 7 6 - B D C D - 4 3 0 7 - B 6 D 6 - E E 2 1 9 2 A 7 2 6 F 0 *



16 press conferences were held and 30 press releases were issued in connection with voters' lists, voting outside the place of permanent residence, voting for members of national minorities and inviting citizens to observe elections, to come out to the elections and calling for respect of the election regulations etc. Altogether, GONG appeared in the media around 1,500 times in October and November.

* "Voters' Guide", add-in in daily and weekly newspapers *Jutarnji list*, *Globus*, *Sportske novosti*, *Arena* and *Gloria* at the beginning of November.



More than 13,000 questions in connection with election rights, voters' lists, election silence, addresses of polling stations, etc. were answered by GONG in October and November.

Citizens donated 84,104 volunteer hours in October and November by offering their free time and services which represent the most valuable addition to our work.

* The article on GONG Parliamentary elections campaign activities in *Split, Jutarnji list*, November 7, 2003

GONG's campaign

2003 Parliamentary elections

BEFORE ELECTIONS WERE CALLED

A number of activities took place before campaign

The Government of the Republic of Croatia did not meet the deadlines for proposing the Law on the State Election Committee as a Permanent Body and Amendments to the Law on Voters' Lists

Campaign for the 2003 parliamentary elections consisted of citizen education campaign, election monitoring, and the analysis of election results and election process. However, we should mention some activities carried out before the campaign started, which nevertheless had an effect on the two-month long campaign.

During 2002 and 2003 GONG conducted the "Election Package" project. The aim of the project was to create recommendations for amending or passing five crucial laws which were to regulate legal and technical aspects of election process: the Law on Voters' Lists, the Law on Political Parties, the Law on the State Election Committee as Permanent Body, the Law on the Financing of Election Campaigns, and the Election Law. The project was funded by the Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Croatia within the program European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights for Croatia.

Five round-table debates, or public discussions dealing with each of the laws respectively, were organized as a part of the project. Workgroups consisting of 3 expert members were formed for every debate and they created a draft of recommendations as a starting point for the public debate. Representatives of political parties, state institutions, the media, international organizations, and independent experts took part in the debates. Every debate ended with the adoption of legal

recommendations that were collected in a publication which is available to the public and was distributed to all participants in the project, members of parliament, relevant government bodies, scientific and educational institutions and all others who were interested.

All these activities had an effect of raising media interest in the issues of election legislation, particularly voters' lists, the State Election Committee, and campaign financing, which turned out to be some of the most important issues in the media during the election campaign. Numerous articles and texts in electronic media, and GONG's activities raised awareness of the public but also of representatives of state institutions about the technical issues of the election process and the necessity of its improvement.

Amendments and Parliament's decisions

During the project, GONG used the adopted recommendations to advocate amendments to election legislation. Four of our amendments were included in the amendments to the Election Law that were passed in the Croatian Parliament on April 2, 2003. The amendments, which were presented to all parliamentary parties, refer to the protection of the right to vote, shortening of election silence period, the use

of exact D'Hondt method for turning votes into mandates, and establishing the obligations of all electronic media with national concession during election campaign. In addition, following GONG's initiative, on April 2, 2003, Croatian Parliament adopted two decisions that obliged the Government of the Republic of Croatia to propose the Law on the State Election Committee as a Permanent Body and Amendments to the Law on Voters' Lists to the Croatian Parliament within 60 days of the adoption of the decisions. However, the Government of the Republic of Croatia did not meet the deadlines for proposing the above-mentioned legislation.

During the summer of 2003, GONG cooperated with the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government in drawing-up the Draft of the Law on the State Election Committee as a Permanent Body. The draft was completed in September 2003 and was delivered to legal experts for their approval. Since the Parliament was dissolved, there was no time to send the draft into parliament procedure before the elections were called.

Good and constructive relations that were built with the State Election Committee, the Ministry of Justice and other institutions during previous campaigns were very helpful in preparing and conducting the 2003 parliamentary elections campaign.

GOALS AND GUIDELINES OF THE CAMPAIGN

Transparency of elections is a prerequisite for citizens' confidence in the election process

GONG's 2003 Parliamentary Elections final goal was fair elections and educated citizens.

During campaign planning the following goals were defined:

- Citizens' education about the election process, legal framework, and elections in general;
- Election monitoring with the help of 3,000 educated non-partisan observers in order to check the election process, parallel vote tabulation and report to the public about the election process and about the election results;
- Strengthening the organization through informing citizens about GONG activities, volunteers' recruitment and building and maintaining GONG's network and database of volunteers and observers;
- Citizens' encouragement to take a more active part in social processes through education about election process and volunteering in election observation.

Although the Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament was not significantly changed compared to the year 2000 elections, the need to inform citizens arose from several reasons. Voters' lists were not updated so it was necessary for citizens to check their status. Also, SEC's Mandatory Instructions regulate a part of election activities that are not regulated by election legislation, and the SEC issued the instructions right before the elections. Mandatory Instructions regulated the schedule of election activities, voting abroad, voting of exiled and displaced persons, voting of citizens with the place of permanent residence outside Croatia and organization of polling stations. Also, a great number of voters were voting for the first time and a certain number of voters found themselves in special situations (disabled, students living out of the place of their permanent residence, illiterate, ill, etc). Unfortunately, the responsible institutions did not conduct any systematic campaign to inform citizens.

Besides all, citizen education contributes to the development of political culture which does not consist only of voting and participating in elections, but also of citizens' active involvement in society even after elections (volunteering, membership in various organizations and initiatives, taking part in various activities- petitions, public debates, radio talk shows) which makes elected representatives more responsible towards their voters.

Independent monitoring of election process helps prevent and/or report on violations of election laws and regulations. Transparency of elections is a prerequisite for citizens' confidence in the election process and institutions, which in effect strengthens the political culture of citizens.

ABOUT ELECTIONS

Election legislation

GONG's election campaign itself was marked by close deadlines and vagueness of certain parts of election process. The campaign started on October 1 although the elections were called on October 20 and the election date set for November 23. The State Election Committee was appointed on October 21. The SEC's Mandatory Instructions were being issued up to the beginning of November, which made it difficult for us to prepare materials, media campaign, and training courses for observers and trainers for "I Vote for the First Time" workshops.

These parliamentary elections, called for November 23, were the fifth elections held in Croatia. Legislation in force was the Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament that was amended on April

21, 2003. Election administration bodies were the State Election Committee, constituency election committees, city and municipality election committees and polling committees. Election system was proportional (except in the election of the representatives of national minorities when the majority system was used) and Croatia was divided into 10 constituencies with 14 representatives elected from each constituency. Up to 14 representatives were elected using non-fixed quota in the Constituency No. XI, the constituency for Croatian citizens living abroad, and 8 representatives were elected in the constituency for members of national minorities, Constituency No. XII. Members of national minorities had the right to decide whether they want to vote for the representative of their minority in the Constituency

No. XII or for candidates' lists in the constituency corresponding to their place of permanent residence. Votes were turned into mandates using D'Hondt method.

Voters are Croatian citizens over the age of 18 (except those who were found legally incompetent). 4,371,608 citizens were registered in voters' lists (3,578,715 voters were registered in constituency voters' lists, 393,844 voters were registered in voters' lists for members of national minorities, 399,049 voters were registered in voters' lists for voting abroad).

Elections were conducted at 6,950 polling stations, 155 of which were abroad.

Structure and preparations

GONG operates through the Head office and four regional offices in Rijeka, Slavonki Brod, Zadar and Zagreb. There were 10 employees working in the Head office, and in the regional offices there were two full-time employees (office coordinators and their assistants) working alongside 5 additional temporary coordinators for the counties that the regional offices cover. County coordinators were in charge of the trainers in particular counties, organized public actions and key groups, kept records of the volunteers/observers and organized observer-training courses.

Head office:

- President, Suzana Jasic, coordinated the campaign.
- Financial Executive, Anela Resanovic, coordinated the distribution of funds and supervised the financial operation of regional offices and costs of trainers.
- Advisor, Ivna Bajsic, coordinated public relations.
- Advisor, Aleksandra Kuratko, was responsible for the web site and help in all segments of the campaign.

- Technical Executive, Igor Pavlekovic, was responsible for the equipment and the IT part of the campaign.
- Legal Advisor, Vanja Skoric, was in charge of all legal issues and training courses.
- Coordinator, Vlatka Svedruzic, coordinated "I Vote for the First Time" project".
- Coordinator, Masa Kovacevic, coordinated distribution, reporting, communication with regional offices and observers abroad.
- Office Manager, Sandra Pernar, was in charge of office administration.
- Administrative Executive, Damir Azenic was hired at the beginning of the campaign and during the campaign he conducted shadowing in order to get to know all aspects of GONG's activities and the campaign; he helped according to the needs.

Regional offices:

Office coordinators were responsible for running the offices and conducting "I Vote for the First Time" project in their counties:

- Ana Zunic (Zadar, 4 counties)
- Jasmina Vukas (Zagreb, 9 counties)
- Mihaela Rajic (Slavonski Brod, 5 counties)
- Assistant Izidora Tomljanovic (Rijeka, 3 counties)

Assistant - County Coordinator was responsible for coordinating trainers and activities in connection with observers, materials and training:

- Alina Jurjevic (Dubrovacko-Neretvanska and Splitsko-Dalmatinska County)
- Hrvoje Rancic (Zadarska and Sibensko-Kninska County)
- Coordinator Aleksandra Vinkerlic (Istarska, Primorsko-Goranska and Licko-Senjska County)
- Dragan Zelic (Karlovačka, Sisacko-Moslavacka and Bjelovarsko-Bilogorska County)
- Danijel Vecerin (Medijumska, Varazdinska, Krapinsko-Zagorska and Koprivnicko-Krizevacka County)
- Vlasta Prohaska and Marija Perisic (The City of Zagreb and Zagrebaka County)
- Natasa Spasojevic (Vukovarsko-Srijemska and Osječko-Baranjska County)
- Zrinka Lamesic (Brodsko-Posavska, Požeško-Slavonska and Viroviticko-Podravska County)

There were two trainers (one team) in every county who, apart from conducting "I Vote for the First Time" workshops, animated and trained observers, distributed materials and acted as observers in mobile teams on the Election Day. In the City of Zagreb, Primorsko-Goranska County and Splitsko-Dalmatinska County there were two teams of trainers conducting the activities because of the size and population of the counties, while the team from Rijeka conducted the activities in Licko-Senjska County.

Trainers:

- Vukovarsko-Srijemska County: Branka Matanovic and Damir Zivkovic
- Osječko-Baranjska County: Marijan Perkovic and Irena Gluhak
- Brodsko-Posavska County: Sasa Radivojevic and Sanja Beslic
- Požeško-Slavonska County: Branko Glas and Josipa Kristo
- Viroviticko-Podravska County: Bozica Merunka and Kristina Maticevic
- Bjelovarsko-Bilogorska County: Katarina Ivce and Jelena Biljan
- Koprivnicko-Krizevacka County: Sandra Cizmak and Igor Blazinovic
- Sisacko-Moslavacka County: Maja Tisaj and Tanja Prpic
- Varazdinska County: Jelena Brezovec and Marko Kljaic
- Medijumska County: Nikola Antonovic and Kristina Zupanic
- Krapinsko-Zagorska County: Marija Kos and Tihana Presecan
- The City of Zagreb: Igor Kujundzic and Tamara Horvat, Jasnica Cindric and Hrvoje Mirosevic



• GONG activists in Regional office Rijeka on Election Day

Educating and informing the citizens

Clips were broadcasted several thousand times on more than 50 radio and TV stations

In the period between October 27 and November 23 GONG conducted the following activities for educating and informing citizens:

800,000 educational brochures were printed containing information about the election process, election system, voting procedure, election administration bodies, voters' lists, voting process for specific categories of voters, functions and duties of observers, violations of election rules, etc. Almost 650,000 brochures were inserted into daily newspapers: Vecernji list, Slobodna Dalmacija and Jutarnji list (domestic and foreign editions), Novi list, Glas Istre and Glas Slavonije, and also, thanks to IREX, they were inserted into a number of local newspapers: Varazdinske Vijesti, Medijumski List, Posavska Hrvatska, Dubrovacki List, Novi Bjelovarac, Narodni List, Zadarski List and Turopoljski Glasnik. GONG activists distributed the rest of the brochures.

For the first time educational posters were printed in cooperation with the State Election Committee and they were distributed as a part of election material. There were two posters put up at 6,795 polling stations (a total of 15,000 posters was printed) and they contained information on the secrecy of vote, documents necessary for voter identification, the criminal acts of voting in place of another person, and influencing voters.

Three video clips were produced and broadcasted on TV stations that granted free-of-charge broadcasting. Video clips (Elections in General, Voters' Lists and Election Day) were broadcasted on the Croatian National Television (HTV), Open Television (OTV), Independent Television (NET), ATV- Split and Channel RI in the period between October 27 and November 23. The clips were broadcasted around 420 times in total on 5 TV stations.

Also, three accompanying audio clips were produced and broadcasted on 25 radio stations that agreed to play

them free of charge and 24 stations that offered discounted prices. Audio clips were broadcasted around 4,500 times in total.

On the www.izbori-info.hr web site, which was put up on October 22, one could find useful information about elections, contact numbers of election bodies, contact numbers of general administrative offices, election regulations (Election Law, SEC's Mandatory Instructions, SEC, Constitutional Court and Ethics



"But that's not all!" brochure for Parliamentary elections

Committee's decisions and announcements), as well as news and information about GONG, etc. 23 portals in Croatia had a link to this site. Both this and www.gong.hr site were daily up-to-dated.

More than 13,000 questions in connection with election rights, voters' lists, election silence, addresses of polling stations, etc. were answered in October and November via info line 060/20-20-20 and email address gong@gong.hr.

30 "Citizens' Hours" with the subject of elections and election campaigns were broadcasted on radio stations around the country in the period between October 25 and November 13.

Also, 790 "I Vote for the First Time" workshops were held in October and November for more than 21,000 high-school students all around the country. Talking about elections and voting right, public advocacy activities and citizen activism in the society revealed the willingness and readiness of young people to take a more active part in democratic processes. Also, many students applied to monitor the elections and those who were not of age volunteered to help in offices and with other activities.

16 press conferences were held and 30 press releases were issued in connection with voters' lists, voting outside the place of permanent residence, voting for members of national minorities and inviting citizens to observe elections, to come out to the elections and calling for respect of the election regulations etc.

Altogether, GONG appeared in the media around 1,500 times in October and November. Also, a pullout about the elections was published in Gloria, Arena, Globus, Jutarnji List and Sportske Novosti which also presented GONG and its activities. GONG's Reminder about the Election Day was published in Slobodna Dalmacija. In total, around 400 newspaper articles were published about GONG or the elections.

- Zagrebaka County: Helena Kereta and Eli Pijaca
- Karlovačka County: Valentina Mesaric and Branka Spoljaric
- Primorsko-Goranska County: Maja Skvaza and Toncija Mustac, Jasmina Ibisevic and Sandra Turina
- Istarska County: Sandra Koroman and Valentina Spinderk
- Zadarska County: Romana Galovic and Tatjana Basic Kostadinovic
- Sibensko-Kninska County: Mirko Milicevic and Vesna Tojic
- Splitsko-Dalmatinska County: Meri Prar and Filip Milicevic, Marina Bozin and Mario Zaja
- Dubrovacko-Neretvanska County: Iva Tokic and Nives Vego

Education

From October 1 to October 5, 2003 a training seminar on the elections was held. The seminar dealt with all the topics necessary for carrying out the project: GONG in general, election process, project activities, task descriptions, reporting, etc. A mid seminar was organized in Zagreb on November 8 with the evaluation of activities in previous period and education and planning the Election Day and observer training.

Since we believed that the elections would be held at the end of November, broad plan of the campaign was:

September 2003 >>> preparing and planning the campaign in detail, building the structure of the campaign by employment of additional coordinators and trainers, training the personnel and determining task descriptions and activities;

October and November 2003 >>> conducting the campaign: compiling educational material, media campaign, training observers and trainers, animating citizens for monitoring the elections, and organizing events of the Election Day;

November 23, 2003 >>> the Election Day;

November and December 2003 >>> post-election activities and reporting.

Two Handbooks for Trainers, a Handbook for Observers and a PVT Handbook, a Guide to Voters' List and a Guide to 2003 Elections were written to be used for internal education for employees, trainers and observers, in order to answer on all citizens' questions.

4,000 handbooks and forms, T-shirts, accreditation strings, umbrellas and bags were printed and produced for observers. Since GONG observers are volunteers and they do not take any money for their work and expenses, umbrellas were sign of gratitude for giving their free time and token for participating in this citizen initiative.

Observer recruitment

3,290 citizens applied to monitor the elections and received the State Election Committee's accreditations

GONG animated citizens to monitor the elections by using the existing database of volunteers (contacting observers from the last elections), media appeals and media campaign, distributing leaflets and brochures, via web site and "I Vote for the First Time" workshops.

28.5 per cent of former observers agreed to monitor the elections again.

Elections monitoring video and audio clips were broadcasted on the national television, 4 local TV stations and 49 radio stations. The video clip was broadcasted around 90 times and the audio clip around 1,300 times.

60,000 "But That's Not All!" leaflets inviting citizens to monitor the elections were printed. They were distributed through the activities of GONG's Parliament Program (Citizens' Hour, Open Parliament, Internship Program), and materials were given out to reporters at press conferences, presentations of GONG's activities and 11 public actions held during the campaign.

Citizens could also apply by filling in application forms on GONG's web site, by sending a printed application form by mail, via phone line 060/20-20-20, or by coming to GONG's offices in person.

In total, 3,290 citizens applied to monitor the elections and they received the State Election Committee's accreditations for monitoring the elections. In order to monitor the elections more successfully, GONG trainers conducted 134 observer-training courses where election legislation and procedures were explained.

At the Elections of representatives to the Croatian Parliament on November 23, 2003, citizens of the Republic of Croatia were electing:

- 140 representatives in 10 constituencies in the Republic of Croatia (I-X)
- up to 14 representatives of the voters without permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia (XI)
- 8 representatives of national minorities (XII)

4,371,608 voters were registered in voters' lists.

3,578,715 voters were registered in constituency voters' lists, while 393,844 voters were registered in voters' lists

for national minorities. 399,049 voters were registered in voters' lists for voting abroad.

Elections were conducted at 6,795 polling stations in Croatia and 155 polling stations abroad.

Elections were monitored by 3,000 GONG observers at polling stations and by 63 mobile observer teams that visited another 1,004 polling stations where there were no GONG observers present or where there were some irregularities reported. This means that 55 per cent of polling stations in the Republic of Croatia were covered. GONG observers were also monitoring the elections in the Diplomatic and Consular offices of the Republic of Croatia in Paris, Vienna, Kotor, Bucharest, Stuttgart and The Hague.

General assessment

GONG's general assessment is that the Elections of representatives to the Croatian Parliament were conducted in accordance with the election legislation although there were some problems with the voting of members of national minorities, voters' lists, and violations of election silence. The level of polling committees' professionalism and understanding of the election procedures ranged from extremely low to high. Irregularities that were noticed were successfully removed in cooperation with election administration bodies.

Election regulation is still not satisfactory and it caused many problems and irregularities in the conduct of the elections, as well as objections from voters, candidates, observers and the media.

Final report on the election

of representatives to the Croatian Parliament, November 23, 2003

Legal framework

Legal regulations that contain provisions on the conduct of parliamentary elections in the Republic of Croatia are:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, ("Narodne Novine"-NN) No. 41/01
- The Constitutional Law on the Constitutional Court - final text, Official Gazette NN, No. 49/02
- The Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, Official Gazette NN, No. 155/02
- The Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian National Parliament - final text, Official Gazette NN, No. 69/03
- The Law on Constituencies, Official Gazette NN, No. 116/99
- The Law on Voters' Lists, Official Gazette NN, No. 19/92
- The Criminal Code, Official Gazette NN, No. 110/97, 27/98, 50/00, 129/00, 51/01 and 111/03
- Mandatory Instructions of the State Election Committee, Official Gazette NN, No. 166/03, 170/03, 171/03, 172/03, 174/03
- Regulations on the Conduct of Electronic Media with State Concession during Election Campaign NN, No. 165/03.
- Regulations on the Rights and Duties of NGO Observers, Official Gazette NN, No. 170/03
- The Code of Electoral Ethics, Official Gazette NN, No. 178/03

The Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian National Parliament and the Law on Constituencies

Under the valid Election Law all Croatian citizens over 18 years of age, except persons who were proclaimed legally incompetent, elect members of the Croatian Parliament on the basis of universal and equal suffrage.

Elections were conducted at polling stations in the Republic of Croatia and in Diplomatic and Consular Offices of the Republic of Croatia abroad.

140 members of Parliament were elected after the Republic of Croatia was divided into 10 constituencies and 14 members of Parliament were elected in every constituency from candidate lists.

In accordance with the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities, members of national minorities elected a total of 8 MPs to the Croatian Parliament in a separate constituency - Constituency No. XII, in the following way: members of the Serbian minority elected 3 members, and the Italian and Hungarian minorities elected one member each. One member was elected by the Czech and Slovak minority combined, one by the Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Romany, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Wallachian and Jewish minorities combined, and one by the Albanian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Macedonian, and Slovenian minorities combined.

Voters without permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia had right to elect up to 14 MPs in a separate constituency- Constituency No. XI.

Election administration bodies were the State Election Committee (SEC), Constituency Election Committees (CECs), Municipal or City Election Committees (MECs, or CiEC) and Polling Committees (PCs). They were formed after the elections were called and they had the responsibility to administer the elections, to ensure the regularity and legality of the elections and the electoral campaign, and to declare results.

Candidates, parties, a group of 100 voters or 5% of the voters of a constituency were able to file objections in

connection with violations of election regulations in the process of candidate registration or election to the SEC not later than 48 hours after the disputable event occurred.

Electoral rights could also be protected by appealing against the decisions of the SEC to the Constitutional Court within 48 hours of receiving the decision.

The Law on Voters' Lists

Voters assert their right to vote on the basis of the voters' lists. Voters' lists are public records kept in general administrative offices of every city or municipality corresponding to voter's place of permanent residence.

Voters who were absent from the place of their permanent residence on the Election Day had the opportunity to vote in the place of their temporary residence. It was necessary for them to remove their name from the voters' list in the place of their permanent residence at least 8 days before the Election Day and temporarily register themselves in the voters' list corresponding to the place of their temporary residence.

Croatian citizens who had the right to vote but who were not registered in the final and verified voters' lists that were delivered to polling stations, had an opportunity to attest their right to vote on the Election Day by presenting a certificate issued by proper authorities. On the Election Day certificates were issued by register's offices (for persons who became of age after the voters' lists were made final), police stations (for certificates of permanent residence) and in general administrative offices.

Voters who have the place of permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia but happened to be abroad on the Election Day voted on presentation of a proof of Croatian citizenship, proof of identity and a certificate for voting abroad issued by the local general administrative office in Croatia. They voted for the constituency in which they have permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia.

Voters who have the place of permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia but live abroad voted on presentation of a proof of Croatian citizenship, proof of identity and an official document of the country where they live that proves they have residence permit there (work visa, refugee card, etc.). They voted for the constituency in which they have permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia.

Voters without permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia voted on the basis of a voters' list kept in the General Administrative Office in Zagreb which was delivered to all diplomatic and consular offices where polling stations were set up.

Mandatory Instructions of the State Election Committee

Mandatory Instructions (MI) are rules established by the SEC after the elections are called which interpret in closer detail the legal provisions for administering elections. Up to November 23, the Election Day, the State Election Committee issued 13 Mandatory Instructions:

- The Sequence and the Timetable of Election Activities (MI I),
- Forms for Nomination Procedures (MI II),
- Nomination Procedures (MI III),
- Forms for Election Procedures (MI IV),
- Rights and Duties of Foreign Observers (MI V),
- Compiling the List of Candidates in Constituency No. XII (MI VI),
- Voting of Persons Serving in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, on Maritime or River Ships Under Croatian Flag and Imprisoned Persons (MI VII),
- Voting of Physically Disabled Persons, Illiterate Persons and Persons Who Are Not Able to Come to Polling Stations (MI VIII),

- The Set-up of Polling Stations (MI IX),
- Voting of Displaced Persons (MI X),
- Forms for Election Procedures (MI XI),
- Voting Abroad (MI XII) and
- Voting of Voters Temporarily Registered in Voters' Lists Outside of the Place of their Permanent Residence (MI XIII).

The Criminal Code

Provisions of the Criminal Code refer to violations of election regulation during election procedures and they have not been changed since the last elections. Articles that stipulate sanctions for particular violations of election rules and regulations can be found in Articles 116-121: Violations of Voter's Freedom of Decision (Article 116), Denying the Right to Vote (Article 117), Abuse of the Right to Vote (Article 118), Violation of the Secrecy of Vote (Article 119), Destroying Election Material (Article 120), and Election Fraud (121).

Regulations on the Conduct of Electronic Media with State Concession during Election Campaign

Under the Regulations, the Croatian Radio and Television and other electronic media with national concession in the Republic of Croatia during the election campaign period, which starts with the declaration of compiled constituency lists and ends 24 hours before the election day, had the obligation to ensure equal access to their broadcasts to all political parties, party coalitions, holders of independent lists, and candidates for representatives of national minorities.

In presenting election activities on their programs, broadcasters had the obligation to ensure journalistic independence, professionalism and competence, consistent respect of the code of journalism ethics, and adherence to the widely-accepted rules and principles of the democratic world, especially the fundamental principle of the freedom of expression protected by Article 10 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Broadcasters were not allowed to give a privileged position in their programmes to any political party or candidate to the disadvantage of other parties or candidates who participated in the election process. Candidates who were also government officials were not allowed to have a privileged position in comparison with other participants in the election process and to use their everyday activities for the promotion of their party.

Regulations on the Rights and Duties of NGO Observers

According to the Election Law, State Election Committee released the Regulations on the rights and duties of NGO observers which regulate the rights and duties of domestic, non-partisan observers. The Rules are completely in line with international standards, and guarantee uninterrupted monitoring of the entire election process and access to all important election related information.

The Code of Electoral Ethics

On November 7 the Ethics Committee of the Republic of Croatia passed the Code of Electoral Ethics with the aim of promoting the fundamental values of democracy in the pre-election period and proscribing the rules of conduct for the election participants.

As a non-partisan body consisting of highly regarded experts, the Ethics Committee was also responsible for monitoring election campaigns and establishing equality and non-discrimination in all media and equal opportunities of campaign presentation for all candidates.

Ethics Committee's Code also invited observers not to express their opinions on the parties and the candidates and not to influence voters' decisions in any way.

Election administration bodies

The State Election Committee

In accordance with the Election Law, the State Election Committee (SEC) was set up as the highest body for administering elections in the Republic of Croatia. Its non-partisan standing membership, appointed by the Constitutional Court, consisted of judges of the Supreme Court and distinguished lawyers (10 members). Enlarged membership was appointed prior to the elections and consisted of members of political parties in proportion to their representation in Parliament. The SEC ensured the legality of elections, appointed members of the lower election committees, issued Mandatory Instructions, announced constituency and candidate lists, and declared the results of the elections.

Due to imprecise provisions of the electoral law, the SEC had to regulate a number of issues by announcing mandatory instructions. 13 mandatory instructions were issued timely. We hold the opinion that the SEC also should have issued Mandatory Instructions referring to the voting procedures for national minorities, as well as Mandatory Instructions referring to the voting procedures for voters who happen to be outside their place of permanent residence but in the same constituency.

Also, during the campaign period the SEC answered a number of questions and resolved objections filed by participants in the election process, lower election administration bodies, NGOs, the media and etc. The most frequent questions and objections referred to the procedures and conditions for nomination, the procedures for appointing members of lower election committees, interpretation of provisions of the Regulations on the Conduct of Electronic Media with State Concession, forms for conducting the elections, election campaigning, voting procedures for different categories of voters, etc.

Some examples:

- 1) The list of polling stations revealed that a large number of private houses (400), as well as many inadequate objects such as pubs, cafés, garages and shops were used as polling stations. Also, some election committees set up polling stations in churches and parish offices which had to be relocated after an objection was filed by the Liberal Party, and the SEC's requested that the polling stations be moved.
- 2) Several media requested interpretation of the Regulations on the Conduct of Electronic Media with State Concession during the Election Campaign. The SEC issued a universal interpretation that the application of the regulations will start after the official compiled constituency lists are declared, i.e. after the start of the election campaign.
- 3) Several lower election committees requested SEC's opinion on the possibility of simultaneously holding the Elections of the representatives to the Croatian Parliament and the elections of the members of municipal/town councils (local self-government). The SEC decided that it was not possible to hold the two elections simultaneously due to different provisions for the election procedures in the two different laws regulating these two types of elections.

Having in mind the working conditions, the amount of work and close deadlines in the election process, we hold the opinion that the SEC administered the elections in a professional way and its cooperation with GONG was satisfactory.

>>> Constituency Election Committees, City and Municipal Election Committees, and Polling Committees

According to the law, the greater part of election procedures is entrusted to the constituency election committees, and city and municipal election committees. CECs have non-partisan standing membership appointed by the SEC, which consists of judges and distinguished lawyers and enlarged membership appointed prior to the elections consisting of members of political parties (10 members). MECs and CiECs consist of standing members who may be members of political parties and enlarged membership appointed prior to the elections (total of 10 members).

In general, election committees' cooperation with GONG was satisfactory.

However, GONG received some complaints made by citizens and appointed members of election committees in connection with the composition of polling committees. In the stated cases, appointments of the members of the polling committees were annulled without any legally founded explanation, which may have influenced the

voters' confidence in the election process. Also, the day before the elections we were contacted by a number of appointed members of polling committees who did not know which committees they were appointed to and they complained that no one had contacted them in connection with the arrangements for the election day.

Posters with the addresses of polling stations and the lists of streets and blocks allocated to particular polling stations were put up only one or two days before the Election Day so GONG had to answer hundreds of phone calls from citizens asking about the locations of their polling stations on the day before the elections, as well as on the Election Day.

The general impression is that election and polling committees were well informed about the procedures, although the conduct of election administration ranged from very poor to excellent. Memorandum on the operation of polling stations, which was handed to all members of polling committees, was supplemented and updated by additional instructions for the operation of polling committees.

Some polling committees reported to GONG that they were not sufficiently informed about the election procedures and asked for help in their work on a number of occasions.

Some polling committees also contacted GONG to inquire about the polling stations particular voters were allocated to. We helped them using the web site www.pravosudje.hr. Polling committees also asked whether they needed only one ballot box for all national minorities, what to do with outdated identification cards, what to do if they give a ballot paper to a person who is not registered in the voters' list, what to do if they give a voter the wrong ballot paper, etc.

In cooperation with the SEC, GONG printed and distributed posters to all polling stations in the Republic of Croatia, which drew citizens' attention to the fundamental rules of the voting procedure (it is allowed to vote only one time, voting is carried out on production of official documents of identification, etc). Polling committees put up the posters at polling stations as a part of the official election material.

The Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government and general administrative offices

The Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-

Government had accepted GONG's initiatives such as checking one's status in the voters' list via phone or the Internet, or temporary registration in a voters' list via fax that aimed to ease the exercise of the right to vote. Voters were able to check their status via the Internet on the web site of the Ministry of Justice www.pravosudje.hr, where they could also look up phone and fax numbers of general administrative offices. After the locations of polling stations were determined, they were also able to check the address of their polling station on the web site or via text messages.

The Ministry also issued two sets of instructions for the use of general administrative offices in all counties. General administrative offices mostly performed their duties in a professional way and provided citizens with information, except in several incidents that were reported from the Splitsko-Dalmatinska County.

However, the Ministry's announcements in connection with voters' lists were insufficient, untimely and difficult to understand. Unclear or untimely explanations of the voting procedures for some categories of citizens (voters changing the place of their permanent residence on the Election Day) and some general administrative offices' unwillingness to provide assistance might have deterred those voters from voting.

Election campaign and the media

Nominations

The State Election Committee received a total of 405 nominations in the period set by law: 363 nominations of candidate lists and 42 nominations of candidates (Constituency No. XI) for the elections of representatives to the Croatian Parliament. The distribution according to the ordinal number of the constituency is as follows: Constituency No. I:

a total of 41 list (25 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 8 independent lists)

Constituency No. II:

a total of 37 list (25 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 4 independent lists)

Constituency No. III:

a total of 32 list (21 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 3 independent lists)

Constituency No. IV:

a total of 30 list (18 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 4 independent lists)

Constituency No. V:

a total of 34 list (19 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 7 independent lists)

Constituency No. VI:

a total of 31 list (21 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 2 independent lists)

Constituency No. VII:

a total of 34 list (22 party lists, 9 coalition lists and 3 independent lists)

Constituency No. VIII:

a total of 31 list (22 party lists, 7 coalition lists and 2 independent lists)

Constituency No. IX:

a total of 36 list (25 party lists, 6 coalition lists and 5 independent lists)

Constituency No. X:

a total of 34 lists (19 party lists, 8 coalition lists and 7 independent lists)

Constituency No. XI:

a total of 23 list (14 party lists, 5 coalition lists and 4 independent lists)

Constituency No. XII:

a total of 42 list (34 party lists and lists of organizations, 1 coalition list, and 7 voters' nominations)

Nominations were submitted for a total of 5 155 candidates, 3 859 (74.86%) of which were men and 1 296 (25.14 %) women.

The average age of the candidates was 45.95 years; the average age of male candidates was 46.96 years and the average age of female candidates was 42.94 years.

Both the youngest male candidate and the youngest female candidate were born in 1985. The oldest male candidate was born in 1917 and the oldest female candidate in 1919.

Due to withdrawal or disallowing of some lists, the number of candidates was reduced to 5 105.

Official election campaign started at midnight on November 6, 2003.

Election campaign financing

Election campaign financing was not regulated in a satisfactory way. There were no provisions that stipulate permissible and impermissible donors, campaign expenditure limits, the obligation of participants to make public the campaign expenditure and the sources of the campaign funds within a set period, and sanctions for violating the regulations. Campaign financing in the Republic of Croatia is completely non-transparent and funds can be gathered from many sources including the state budget from which a substantial sum is allocated to different parties.

If they fulfil certain conditions, all political parties and candidates (independent or candidates of national minorities) who contest in at least one constituency have the right to reimbursement of election campaign expenses from the state budget.

Under the Law on Political Parties (Official Gazette, NN No. 76/93., 111/96., and 164/98.), parties who have seats in Croatian Parliament receive funds in advance no later than 48 hours after the adopted lists become final. They receive the amount that was set for the year preceding the elections. 39 142 714.00 kn was disbursed to parliamentary parties for election campaign expenses in these elections.

Other parties and independent lists that win at least 5% of the valid vote also have the right to reimbursement of campaign expenses. They receive the reimbursement within 30 days of the declaration of the official results. In these elections, the Government of the Republic of Croatia set the amount of 40,000.00 kn for reimbursement of election expenses to each party or list that received at least 5% of the vote of a constituency and did not have any seats in parliament before the elections.

Under the Election Law, every party contesting the elections has to make public the estimated amount and the source of its own election campaign budget. As it can be seen from the media coverage, only a few parties complied. However, the exact sources and amounts of campaign expenses remain unknown, which reduces political parties' credibility and voters' confidence in the election process.

Election campaign

Political parties' and independent candidates' election campaigns were conducted in an atmosphere of peace and tolerance, which is confirmed by the number of announcements and warnings issued by the Ethics Committee as the body in charge of evaluating the conduct of the participants in the election campaign. The Ethics

Committee issued a total of 6 announcements and one warning to campaign participants. Announcements mostly referred to the destroying of election material, while the warning was issued against the calls for the use of violence.

The media

According to OSCE's report, the media fulfilled their legal obligations stipulated by the Election Law and the Regulations on the Conduct of Electronic Media with National Concession. The only exception was the privately owned television network NOVA TV that considered the

Violations of election silence

The lack of sanctions for violations of election silence proved to be the main weakness of election legislation and sub legal regulations. The day before the elections (November 22) and on the Election Day (November 23) GONG received several dozen citizens' reports of the violations of election silence.

Compared to the 2000 elections when the media committed most violations of election silence, in this election only one such incident occurred.

The following cases were reported to GONG:

November 22, 2003:

- 1) A candidate at the elections in Australia, polling station number 5 in the Keysborough Catholic Centre, reported the presence of the campaign material of HDZ (the Croatian Democratic Union) at the polling station
- 2) A citizen from Slavonski Brod, neighbourhood Slavonija II, reported that around 4pm on November 22, the leaflet "Vesna - Your Representative" which promotes Vesna Skare-Ozbolt, a candidate of DC (the Democratic Centre), was put into her letter box.
- 3) A citizen from Split, from Bacvice, Jure Kastelana 18, reported that during the morning of November 22 leaflets of HB (the Croatian Bloc) and HIP (the Croatian True Revival party), and DC and HSLs (the Croatian Social-Liberal Party) were being thrown into letter boxes.
- 4) A citizen from Zagreb reported that a campaign video of Ivo Sanader, HDZ candidate, was played around 2pm on November 22 on a large commercial screen placed in the public area in Ban Josip Jelacic Square.
- 5) A citizen from Zagreb reported that in the afternoon of November 22 HDZ's leaflets were thrown into the letterbox at Gustava Krkleca 3, in Spansko.
- 6) Citizens from Precko, Zagreb, reported that HNS (Croatian National Party) and HND (Croatian Independent Democrats) leaflets were being attached to the windcreens of the parked cars on November 22.
- 7) A citizen from the Zagreb city centre reported that Marko Veselica's leaflets were thrown into letterboxes on November 22.
- 8) A voter from Germany reported that the busses that were arranged to take the voters to the polling stations in Stuttgart had HDZ posters put up on them.
- 9) A citizen from Gornji Kukuruzari, reported that HNS leaflets were thrown into letterboxes on November 22.

Regulations unconstitutional and on October 29, 2003 filed a Motion for Review of Constitutionality of the Regulations, which is still undergoing proceedings.

Voters were able to receive information on parties/candidates' platforms from the media. However, the short duration of the election campaign and the large number of candidates lead to the overcrowding of media space and the forms and the time of certain broadcasts were quite unappealing to viewers and listeners. Just like in the last parliamentary elections, there were no televised debates of the major election participants, which is usually the most interesting part of presentations of party platforms.

10) A citizen from Sarengrad reported that HSS (Croatian Peasant Party) leaflets were distributed door-to-door on November 22.

11) putting up of HDZ's posters in Prapatnica, giving out the Croatian Party of Rights' leaflets in Marsonia, Slavonski Brod, putting up posters and giving out leaflets by Ante Kovacevic, a candidate of the HKDU (Croatian Christian and Democratic Union) in Gracac, giving out HIP and HB leaflets in Precko, Zagreb, HDZ posters in Sveta Nedjelja.

November 23, 2003

- 1) Citizens report HDZ's posters around polling stations - Drnis, Pokrovnik, Kljaka, Velika Gorica, Zagreb
- 2) A citizen from Split reported that in the Church of St. Dominic at the first mass at 7am, the priest had appealed to the congregation to vote for the list number 6 (HDZ)
- 3) Radio Otocac (9:30 -10:00) broadcasted a half-hour show in which the mayor spoke about his accomplishments and the accomplishments of his party (HDZ)
- 4) GONG observer reported an HSLs/DC jumbo poster 10 meters from the polling station in Suhopolje
- 5) A citizen from Kastel Sucurac reported HIP and HDZ leaflets being thrown from a car at 5.30am
- 6) A citizen from Bilje reported that she had found a leaflet vilifying the party in power signed by the opposition councillors of the Bilje City Council thrown into her letterbox on the morning of November 23.
- 7) A citizen from Zagreb (Kvaternik Square), reported that he had found an SDP leaflet in his letterbox that was not there the day before
- 8) A citizen reported party slogans and abbreviations written on a front wall in Marina, polling station number 2
- 9) A citizen from Zagreb reported HSS posters in front of the polling station 24 at Malesnica elementary school
- 10) A citizen from Zagreb reported a van with HDZ symbols driving around Staglišće
- 11) A citizen from Rijeka reported that HNS and PGS posters and leaflets were attached to cars in Frane Belulovica Street
- 12) An objection filed by SDP in Metkovic in connection with HDZ posters that were put up during the night
- 13) A citizen from Zagreb reported that HDZ put up its posters in Slavenska Street in Crnomerec
- 14) At the central square in Varazdin there was a balloon with the picture of Vesna Pusic flying near the election committee

The elections

The atmosphere

These elections were characterized by numerous violations of election silence by parties and their supporters. The police had twenty or so interventions, usually in connection with disorderly behaviour of drunken voters.

In general, we think that the elections were conducted in an atmosphere of tolerance and democracy, except at several polling stations where there occurred some verbal incidents between voters and verbal assaults on the members of polling committees, and members of national minorities.

Election committees' mostly fair organization of the elections contributed to the overall atmosphere. The State Election Committee and other election committees were very transparent and open in their work.

GONG's Central office established good cooperation with the State Election Committee, city/municipal election committees, as well as with most of the polling committees.

When trying to solve some minor problems at particular polling stations, we encountered help and understanding of most of the election and the polling committees.

Election Day

GONG assessment of the election process is based on the reports of the observers and mobile observer teams, and citizens' reports. Observers reported only a small number of incidents. Based on the information gathered and processed by midnight, we can report that:

- Polling stations throughout Croatia were opened and closed on time, and polling committees received all necessary election material on time and they properly prepared polling stations for voters' arrival.
- Elections were occasionally disrupted by incidents of disorderly behaviour of drunken voters
- Day before the elections and the Election Day were characterized by numerous violations of election silence

Violations of the election process regulations

Influencing voter's decision

Attempts to influence voter's decision were reported at three polling stations.

Polling committees did not inform the members of national minorities about their right to choose between the lists, and some polling committees were harassing and preventing the members of national minorities from voting for the party lists

(Zagreb, Constituency I, polling station 223; Trnava, Svetoblažje, Constituency IV; Zagreb, Trnje, Constituency I, polling station 75; Zagreb, Dubrava, Constituency II, polling station 59; Vukovar, Constituency V, polling station 3, 3rd Elementary School; Zagreb, Constituency I, Primorska 32, polling station 17, kept the ballot papers for national minorities under the desk instead of on the desk).

Family voting and not verifying voters' identity

This violation was reported mostly in rural areas.

Voters already circled in voters' lists

Cases when voters came out to vote but their names were already circled in the voters' lists were reported in: Split, Gripe, Constituency X, polling station 34; Samobor, Constituency VII, polling station 48; Split, Pujanke, Constituency X; Zadar, Constituency IX, polling station 3.

Verbal assaults and violence

Members of City Election Committee from the Croatian True Revival party and the Croatian Bloc verbally assaulted a GONG mobile observer team and TV Arte team when they were visiting polling stations. A person forced the door, threw the ballot boxes about and threatened to beat up a member of the polling committee in Constituency II, at the polling station number 8, at the Community Centre, Sv. Petar Cvstec. In Constituency I, at the polling station number 185, Srednjaci bb a drunken person

threatened a GONG observer after he was not allowed to vote because the date of birth on his identity card did not correspond to the date of birth in the voters' list. The person threatened to return with a gun, and after he was brought in, he was found to be in possession of a knife.

Too many ballot papers in ballot boxes

At several pooling stations observers reported that the number of ballot papers in the ballot boxes was in excess of the indicated number of voters recorded as having cast ballots:

Constituency I, Zagreb, polling station number 20 - 2 extra ballot papers in the box. They contacted the SEC in order to check.

Constituency IV, Jagodnjak (the village of Bolman), polling station number 3 D an excess of ballot papers. We contacted the municipal election committee and they said that the polling committee had already asked for their help in counting the ballots and that they will keep our observation in mind. Constituency II, Sesvete, polling station number 84 - 5 extra ballot papers in the box. The president of the polling committee would not enter observer's objection into the protocols. We contacted the SEC.

Constituency I, Zagreb, polling station number 113 D 4 polling committees were located in the same room and their ballot papers got mixed up. They tried to arrange them according to the serial numbers. We contacted the SEC.

Constituency VII, Jelenje, polling station number 1, Zoretici, premises of the Bocce Club Zoretici- 2 extra ballot papers.

Several other cases of extra ballot papers in the ballot boxes were noticed at the PVT call centre.

Other

- Voters appeared with certificates from the Social Democratic Party saying they were party observers asking to monitor the counting of the ballots- Klostar Ivanic, polling station number 8, Lipovec Lonjski.
- Polling stations not set up properly (two polling stations set up in one room, although it is against the law) - several reports
- Incomplete polling committees (two instead of three members)- two reports
- Pencils used for circling voters' names in the voters' lists- three reports
- Closing the polling station at 14:30pm because all the voters had voted- Pozega, polling station number 42, Community Centre Ugarcı.
- Constituency V, polling station number 4, M. Gupca 21a, Vinkovci- the polling committee took the voters' list from the polling station to a voter who was not able to come to the polling station, in order for her to exercise the right to vote. The voter is a member of a national minority but she decided to vote for party lists, so the members of the polling committee took the voters' list in order for her to sign it. Voters were not able to vote at the polling station until the voters' list was returned.
- Constituency I, polling station number 139, Drenovacka 4, Zagreb- around 6pm the polling committee noticed that they have the national minorities' voters' list that belongs to the polling station 140. Several voters were sent away from the polling station number 140 due to this mix-up. They contacted the SEC.
- Constituency X, Ston, polling station number 16, the same polling committee conducted the elections for the representatives to the Croatian Parliament and the elections for the town hall even though, according to the election laws, the committees should differ in their membership.

Most frequent phone calls GONG received

2053 citizens contacted GONG on the Election Day. Most questions referred to the locations of polling stations (574). Other questions referred to the voting procedures for disabled, old and infirm persons (119), the procedure for voting with a certificate and the voting procedure for national minorities (129).

Most common complaints:

- violations of election silence
- voters' lists that were not updated even in cases when citizens were registered in voters' lists in the last elections - 128 calls
- citizens who temporarily registered in voters' lists but were not listed
- violated secrecy of vote
- polling committees' unawareness of the election procedures, not informing the members of national minorities of their right to decide what lists they want to vote for, preventing the members of national minorities from voting for party lists D 13 reports
- unmarked polling stations

A number of members of national minorities contacted GONG protesting against the voting procedures for national minorities, saying that they felt like second-rate citizens, and resenting the fact that the polling committees had to look them up in separate voters' lists and that they were asked to publicly express their national affiliation.

GONG also received a number of reports that were impossible to verify, or that were found to be false or a misinterpretation after election committees were contacted. GONG also received a number of abusive phone calls in which the citizens blamed GONG for poor organization and administration of elections, incomplete voters' lists, polling committees' inability to visit the voters at their homes, voting procedures for some groups of citizens.

Election process abroad

GONG conducted an ad hoc survey on how well prepared the diplomatic and consular offices of the Republic of Croatia were for administering the election process. Two weeks before the Election Day, a private email inquiring about the voting procedures of the Croatian citizens in the 2003 Parliamentary elections was sent to 60 or so consular and diplomatic offices. The aim of the survey was to find out how informed the diplomatic and consular offices were about the election process. 34 offices emailed their replies within a week. All replies, except 2 (from Munich and Tokyo), contained accurate information and instructions on the voting procedures, also offering additional help and explanations. The diplomatic and consular offices in the following countries provided positive replies: Denmark, Austria, Norway, Finland, Italy (x2), Russia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Australia (x2), New Zealand, France, Slovakia, Belgium, Ukraine, Slovenia, Hungary, USA (x2), BIH (x2), Greece, The Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Macedonia, Morocco, Venezuela, Indonesia, Turkey, and South Africa.

Considering the number of voters in Serbia and Montenegro, we hold the opinion that polling stations should have been set up in more cities.

Voting abroad was conducted for two days, November 22 and 23, 2003.

During the first day of the elections abroad, GONG received 2 objections made by election contestants:

- The objection made by Croatian Bloc and Croatian True Revival party (HIP): polling station number 8 (letters D to J) in the Consulate General of the Republic of Croatia in Munich was not open on time, at 7.00am, but at 7.30am, ballot boxes were not properly sealed, the president of the polling committee refused to enter an objection by a member of the polling committee into the Protocols of the Polling Committee, and a Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) campaign poster was removed from the polling station only after repeated warnings by a member of the committee.
- an objection filed by a candidate at the elections in Australia, polling station 5 in the Keysborough Catholic Centre refers to the presence of HDZ campaign material at the polling station.

All objections were directed to the State Election Committee.

Re-run elections

After election materials were submitted, the State Election Committee ruled that the elections would be invalidated at polling station No. 30 in Gudci, Velika Gorica, Constituency No. VI because there were too many ballot papers in the ballot box. Re-run elections were held on November 30, 2003 with a new polling committee. Two GONG observers monitored the elections and the counting of the votes and their general assessment was that there were no violations of election procedures.

Results and objections

The State Election Committee declared the final results of the elections of representatives to the Croatian Parliament on December 3, 2003. According to the official results 154 representatives were elected to the Croatian Parliament - 140 from the party lists in constituencies No I-X, 4 representatives in the Constituency No XI and 8 national minorities' representatives in the Constituency No XII.

According to voters' lists that general administrative offices delivered to polling stations and voting certificates, a total of 4,371,432 voters came out to the elections. 2,604,889 ballot papers were found in ballot boxes, which means that the turnout was 59.59%, 2.3% of the total number of ballot papers cast was declared void and 15,326 voters received their ballot papers but did not cast them into ballot boxes.

The State Election Committee received two objections on the results of the elections but the objections were rejected. Appeals to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia followed. One appeal was dismissed as untimely, and the other one was rejected. The official results of the elections were published in the Official Gazette (Narodne Novine, No. 192/03.) on December 8, 2003, when the 20-day-long deadline for constituting a new Parliament started.

In going through the results in electronic form, GONG found some irregularities in the number of voters who came out to the elections (circled in the voters' lists) and the number of ballot papers found in the ballot boxes at some polling stations. At some polling stations the difference is more than 100, 200 or even 300 voters, which means that more than 300 voters at one polling station (from a total of, for example, 900 voters) decided not to cast their ballot paper into the box. Since some of these numbers significantly diverge from the average for the country as a whole, GONG asked the State Election Committee to make the original election material from these polling stations available for inspection. We inspected the material in January and February and witnessed that all irregularities in numbers came from polling committee's lack of knowledge about filling the minutes.

Recommendations

The State Election Committee

It is necessary to make the State Election Committee (SEC) a permanent body as soon as possible. Past members of the SEC were judges who had to perform their duties in court during the election period. In these elections, once again, the SEC had a close deadline after the elections were called (only 32 days) to pass 13 Mandatory Instructions, answer all questions, and deal with objections, appoint members of lower committees, prepare the Reminder for the Operation of Polling Committees, coordinate the printing and distribution of election material, as well as the technical aspects of the elections.

The SEC should become a permanent body in order to:

- 1) Provide better technical organization of elections
- 2) Provide continuous education to members of election committees and polling station committees
- 3) Ensure the continuity of informing and educating voters
- 4) Provide support to candidates
- 5) Establish easier coordination of government administration bodies
- 6) Control campaign financing
- 7) Facilitate research

This type of permanent body can pay more attention to educating and providing timely information to all voters, members of polling committees, election committees and even candidates themselves. This is especially important because election rules change just before every election, which leads to legal insecurity and untimely informing of voters and candidates.

The Law on the State Election Committee as a Permanent Body should regulate:

- The composition and appointment of the members of the SEC
- Incompatibility of the membership in the SEC with the performance of other functions
- The functions of the SEC in the period between elections
- Special obligations of the SEC during the election process for parliamentary, presidential, or local elections, as well as in early elections at all levels, and the elections for local self-government
- The SEC's responsibilities for conducting a referendum
- Financing of the SEC

Since the former Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government has already drafted the law and the presidential elections are expected to be held this year, we appeal to the Croatian Parliament for this Law to be adopted as soon as possible.

Law on Voters' Lists

The outdated Law on Voters' Lists (from 1992) is one of the main obstacles for conducting elections in a quality manner and facilitating the exercise of the right to vote to all categories of voters. In these elections the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government and the State Election Committee were once again forced to regulate the issues surrounding voters' lists by issuing a number of Mandatory Instructions and official directives. Since the Mandatory Instructions and the directives were issued within a month of the Election Day, voters received information on the exercise of their right to vote only after particular rules and regulations were passed.

Apart from this, one of the major problems is the fact that voters' lists are not up-to-dated. Persons who have died or moved without officially changing their place of permanent residence can often be found registered in voters' lists. Although the Law stipulates the removal from voters' lists *ex officio* (the official has to determine without any doubt that persons who have died or moved away are registered in a voters' list), in reality this rarely happens because there are no necessary records.

Once again we received phone calls from citizens who were not registered in voters' lists although they had been registered in previous elections.

Another problem is the lack of a centralized voters' list. At the moment, this leads to:

- Difficulties in checking one's status in the voters' list outside of the place of permanent residence
- Problems in determining the election body of the whole country
- Problems in allocating voters to particular polling stations
- Inability to control possible double entries in voters' lists.

We recommend amendments to the Law on Voters' Lists. The Law needs minor technical amendments with the aim of:

- Increasing efficiency and accurateness of keeping records
- Establishing an internal network within government administration for transferring necessary data.
- Creating a central electoral register
- Increasing the responsibility for updating voters' lists
- Increasing the quality of informing citizens about voting procedures for different categories of voters
- Resolving the issue of the content of entries in voters' lists (citizen identification number- JMBG)
- Providing free access to voters' lists to all those who are interested.

Election campaign financing

These elections witnessed great media and citizen interest in the sources and expenses of election campaign financing. Some parties made public the approximate size of their election campaign budget, but there was no systematic revealing of election campaign expenditure or donors. Since there are no precise information on the amounts and sources of the funds spent in the campaign, a great number of citizens feel distrust towards political parties and have a negative attitude towards their financing.

Election process cannot be considered transparent until issues of election campaign financing are resolved and we appeal for the Law on Election Campaign Financing to be passed. Above all, this Law should determine the deadlines for election campaign financing, set limits to party and candidate campaign expenditure, prohibit certain donors (foreign donors, government institutions and state-owned companies, non-profit, religious and humanitarian organizations) and limit some types of donations (e.g. anonymous donations exceeding a certain amount). Also, it is important to proscribe that parties and candidates have the obligation to submit a statement of donations and an election expenses return the proper bodies and that these reports have to be made public. Recommendations also refer to determining the responsibility of the future permanent State Election Committee for implementation of these provisions, as well as to possible penalties. The passing of new and detailed legal regulations, political parties' and candidates' adherence to them and consistency in transparent operation would increase citizens' confidence.

The Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament

The Law on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament is not sufficiently precise in the regulation of technical organization of elections, which resulted in the passing of a large number of subordinate legislation (Mandatory Instructions) prior to the elections. This had a negative effect on voters' and candidates' confidence in the law. Also, close deadlines for performing all election activities create additional pressure, confusion and insecurity in all those who participate in elections- administrators, candidates, observers and voters.

That is why we suggest the following:

a) All issues regulated by Mandatory Instructions should be proscribed by Law

The chairman of the State Election Committee sent the same suggestion to all government institutions on several occasions. The regulation in question refers to the provisions that regulate the technical aspects of election administration which should be proscribed by the legislator and not by an administrative body such as the SEC. These provisions already exist which means that they should only be finalized and incorporated into the existing legislation. They refer to:

- The sequence and the timetable of election activities
- Forms for conducting elections
- Voting procedures for persons serving in the armed forces of the Republic of Croatia, persons serving on river or maritime ships under Croatian flag or imprisoned persons
- Voting procedures for persons with physical disabilities, illiterate persons, and persons who are not able to come to polling stations
- The set-up of polling stations
- Voting procedures for exiled persons and voters abroad
- The rights and duties of observers and the procedure for monitoring the operation of election administration bodies

b) Expanding the deadlines in election process

For the purpose of increasing the quality of the election process deadlines for conducting pre-election activities should be expanded from 30 to at least 45/60 days so that all election activities can be carried out in time.

c) Decreasing the number of members in election bodies with in order to economize expenses

Because of a high number of election administration bodies and the fact that all bodies have an even number of members which partly paralyses the decision-making process, the membership of election administration bodies should be the following:

- 1) Constituency Election Committees and Town/Municipality Election Committees should consist of 9 members - 5 judges, legal experts or political scientists appointed by the SEC (or a CEC). The remaining 4 members would be 2 representatives of the political party/coalition in power and 2 representatives of oppositional political parties/coalitions in accordance with party representation in parliament and accepted candidacies, as well as their deputies.
- 2) Polling committees should consist of 7 members - 3 non-partisan members and 4 members representing election participants- 2 representatives of the political party/coalition in power and 2 representatives of oppositional political parties/coalitions in accordance with party representation in parliament and accepted candidacies
- 3) Non-partisan members elect the president and the deputy on the first session of a committee.

d) Systematic education of the members of election bodies (particularly the members of polling committees)

A number of irregularities that were reported on the Election Day once again occurred as a consequence of the polling committees' lack of knowledge and unfamiliarity with the legal regulations of election process. Despite the fact that Reminders of the Operation of Polling Committees were issued, we think that it is not enough to ask members of polling committees to only read the Reminders (which many of them received only on the Election Day) for the elections to be conducted well. Educational training courses should be carried out several days before the elections.

e) Allowing party/partisan observers to monitor elections

On several occasions in these elections, political parties sent their observers to polling stations although that was against the law. Since political parties are those who are most interested in elections being conducted in a fair and transparent manner, we think that party observers should be allowed to monitor elections, as they are allowed to do on local and presidential elections. If the number of members in polling committees were lowered there would be no obstacles to allowing party observers of those parties whose members do not sit in polling committees to monitor elections.

f) Postal voting

One of the problems that arose in these elections was the problem of voting procedures for different categories of voters who were not able to vote at their polling stations on the election day (voters who were absent from their place of permanent residence on the election day, voters serving in the armed forces, voters serving on ships under Croatian flag, voters in penal institutions, etc). Following experiences of countries that have the legal possibility to vote by post (Germany, United Kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, etc), we recommend that this problem be solved by introducing this possibility into election legislation of the Republic of Croatia.

This would reduce the red-tape procedures of applying for special polling stations and the need to set up additional polling stations. As many as 483 polling stations of the regular polling stations (except polling stations set up in army barracks, prisons and on ships) were set up by the State Election Committee for voters who were absent from their place of permanent residence on the election day. Apart from that, 155 additional polling stations were set up abroad and 1,550 additional members of polling committees were appointed for administering the elections abroad. If we take into account that the gross daily expense allowance for one member of polling committee in these elections was 540kn, this would save (540 x 1,550) 837,000kn on the fees paid out to the members of polling committees abroad (not taking into account the cost of election material that was sent abroad and the postal charges).

The right to vote by post would be granted to all voters who inform their city/municipality election committee or the State Election Committee for Voters Abroad in time that they will not be able to vote at their polling station on the Election Day. Reasons for voting by post refer to one's absence from the place of permanent residence, regardless of whether the person is in the country of abroad. GONG's recommendations published in the Election Package publication defined the system for voting by mail that could be applied in Croatia without violating the secrecy of vote and creating conditions for election frauds.

Voting of members of national minorities

Voting of members of national minorities should be proscribed in a more democratic manner, taking into consideration national minorities. This can be done only by proscribing an additional vote that the members of minorities can, if they want to, use to vote for additional representatives of national minorities. All other solutions do not take minorities into consideration, but only help spread unease, anxiety and abstention by insisting on two voters' lists, transferring citizens from one list to the other, making voters' nationality public in front of the polling committee and other voters.

The Law on Constituencies

The valid Law on Constituencies stipulates 10 constituencies in Croatia whose territorial range/extend disrupts the territorial organization of the Republic of Croatia. We recommend that the Law on Constituencies be amended in such a way that constituencies follow territorial organization of Croatia so that the citizens can elect representatives who would represent them, their interests and their region.

Regulations on the Conduct of Electronic Media with State Concession during Election Campaign

The Regulations require that electronic media with state concession ensure presentation on equal footing to all political parties, party coalitions, holders of independent lists and candidates for representatives of national minorities in their broadcasts. Having in mind openly shown dissatisfaction of voters, election candidates, and journalists with the program regulations (reporting from election rallies, special broadcasts presenting lists, lack of election debates, etc) we think that the Croatian Parliament should put in some additional effort and change the Regulations in such a way that they ensure the presentation of election candidates on an equal footing and in an interesting and dynamic way, taking into consideration expert (journalist) opinions.

The Regulations do not in any way proscribe the violations and penalties for violations of the rules of election campaigning and election silence. Regulations should contain penalties for violations of the rules of election campaigning and election silence, to whom and when the objections should be filed and what the deadline for resolving objections is.

The Code of Election Ethics and the Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee was appointed 17 days prior to the elections, and the Code of Election Ethics was adopted 15 days before the elections. The Code regulates the fundamental values of election campaigns, the conduct of election participants, equality and non-discrimination in the opportunities of pre-election presentation and the conduct of the observers of the election process. With the purpose of improving the quality of their work and pointing out the importance of a body such as Ethics Committee, we recommend the following:

- Croatian Parliament should adopt the Code of Election Ethics as an official document that proscribes the fundamental values and the conduct of election participants. We think that the issues regulated by the Code are of overall importance to all citizens so the Code should not be written by a body that consists of only 7 persons, regardless of their reputation and expertise. Also, this type of universal code could be applied to all types of elections, not only parliamentary.
- The Ethics Committee should be set up as a permanent body which would function during all elections (parliamentary, presidential, local)
- The Ethics Committee should be given the power to take actions in cases of violations of the Code of Election Ethics (start proceedings with other bodies, etc) because otherwise the violations of the Code could not be sanctioned. Ethics Committee's public condemnation is only one of the possible sanctions, however it did not have much effect on the conduct of public officials in these or in the last elections.

Conclusion

Amendments or adoptions of the above-mentioned legislation are the only way to make the election process completely transparent, to make sure that Croatian citizens are informed and to make them feel dignified while exercising their right to vote.

If the election legislation remains the same, the next elections will not be assessed positive regardless of the quality and the atmosphere of democracy surrounding the elections.

Therefore, we appeal to the Croatian Parliament, ministries and other government institutions to launch and carry out a complete reform of the election legislation of the Republic of Croatia in order to approximate it to the standards of the European Union.

Observers

Observers at polling stations

They were observing opening the polling stations, voting procedures, the work of polling committees, counting the ballots and determining the election results. After the polling stations were closed and ballot papers were counted, every observer had to fill in form G1, and in case any irregularities occurred, form K1. Around 2,000 observers returned the forms to GONG on time for further processing.

PVT observers

There were 816 observers who participated in the Parallel Vote Tabulation project. The number of polling stations included into PVT (depending on the size of constituency) was determined by the systematic

probabilistic sample method and it added up to 12 to 20% of polling stations on average in one constituency. 10 constituencies were included in the sample. After polling stations were closed, PVT observers filled in report forms and sent the data to the PVT centre so that the first results and the distribution of mandates could be announced based on the sample.

Mobile observer teams

There were 3 to 5 mobile teams in every county. There were 63 mobile teams in total and they visited 1,004 polling stations that had no GONG observers present.

Every mobile team had a list of polling stations they had to visit if there were no emergency calls from observers at polling stations. In case there was an emergency call the mobile team that covered the particular area would

go to the polling station in question to check and confirm the report to the head office which then contacted the proper election committee.

After visiting a polling station a mobile team would fill in form M1.



• GONG observers in a polling station
(Photo from *Vecernji list*, November 24, 2003)

Offices

Regional offices

On the Election Day, all GONG offices were on call from 6 am for at least 12 pm. Office coordinators and volunteers (usually underage volunteers who could not monitor the elections) were on duty in offices.

Regional offices:

- answered citizens' questions
- coordinated and contacted mobile observer teams
- filled in report forms about the election day and delivered them to the Head office
- informed the media about events of the Election Day in their county/region.

Head office

The Head office was also on duty from 6am until after midnight. A free 0800 line was brought into operation on the Election Day so that the observers could report any problems and difficulties. 1,514 phone calls were received on 060/20 20 20 line and 0800 line, usually in connection with polling stations, voting of members of national minorities, violations of election silence, etc.

The office operated as a round-the-clock press centre, issuing information and announcements that they received from the regional offices at set times. All information was put up on GONG's web site. Media interest was very high and almost all TV and radio stations in the country asked us to give statements.

Three announcements were issued:

- first at 11am about the events of the Election day until 10am
- second at 5pm about the events of the election day until 4pm
- a press conference was held at 9.15pm at which the Head office issued GONG's report on the Election Day and declared unofficial PVT results two different times.

A GONG President was invited to take part in a special TV broadcast on the Croatian Radio-Television which covered the elections. First unofficial election results gathered from 40% of polling stations using PVT method were declared on the broadcast.

» ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING THE CAMPAIGN

Other activities in October and November

26 interns worked as volunteers in the Croatian Parliament (until its dissolution), the Government, and bodies of local administration and self-government as a part of the Internship program. 15 elementary schools and high schools from all around the country visited Croatian Parliament as a part of the Open Parliament program. Also, 19 Citizens' Hours were organized in 14 towns dealing with subjects important to local communities (municipal services, young people and drugs, operation of public services, mine clearance, fishing-belt area, etc).

First draft of "How to Communicate with Local Media — Guide for NGO's and Civic Initiatives" was made. It is financed by the AED (Academy for Educational Development).

Besides that, GONG conducted consultations in Georgia for members of Fair Elections (ISFED), Georgian nongovernmental organization that monitors elections, to prepare them for the parliamentary elections that were held in Georgia on November 2, 2003. Six GONG representatives observed Georgian elections, as a part of the OSCE mission.

GONG carried on with its usual activities alongside the campaign.



• GONG representatives from Zadar and Split during "Citizens' Hour" about elections on Radio Sinj, November 23, 2003

Parallel Vote Tabulation

Despite the problems that arose in the realization of the project, the results are more than satisfactory - from the official SEC's results, PVT results differed only in one constituency for one mandate

The aim of the PVT (Parallel Vote Tabulation) project was to independently gather and process election results for constituency lists from polling stations in order to conduct an independent verification of the official results. Since the election silence period ends at 7pm on the election day, right after the polling stations close, GONG's aim this year was also to declare election results estimates as soon as possible after the polling stations close.

The project started on October 1 and ended on November 25, 2003. 816 volunteers, 46 trainers, 23 members of GONG staff, and leaders and 40 call centre agents participated in the project. PVT call centre was established in a location that already had an operating computer and communication network, which was necessary to carry out the project.

Sample for gathering data from 12-20% of polling stations in the Republic of Croatia was established by gathering all results of the vote. We used the same sampling methods as in the 2000 parliamentary elections. On November 16, 814 polling stations were chosen to

participate in the PVT project and the election results were to be phoned to the call centre from these polling stations. After a total of 820 handbooks and forms were printed and distributed, we started assigning PVT observers to polling stations and we started PVT observer training. All PVT observers passed general GONG's observer-training course and an additional short training course about the PVT project and the procedures for filling in the forms and reporting PVT results to the call centre.

County coordinators in regional offices conducted logistic activities of the PVT project and observer trainers worked on the recruitment and training of PVT observers around the country.

PVT call centre started receiving phone calls at 7pm and stopped receiving calls and results at midnight. During these 5 hours PVT agents received results from 688 polling stations but 78 results were not processed because the results were invalid. Results from 128 polling stations were never delivered to the PVT call centre. The reason was application slowness and observers

had to wait very long. It was impossible to test the application in real circumstances and we didn't predict this obstacle. Also, it was not possible to reach the call centre from a fixed line in Slavonia due to an error of the Croatian Telecommunications (HT). Agents and operators made 27,400 entries into the application while average number of entries per minute was 84.32. Results were received from 84.29% of PVT polling stations and they were not reported (valid nor invalid) from 15.71% of the polling stations.

Despite the problems that arose in the realization of the project, which are the reason why we can not tell that project was completely successful, the results were more than satisfactory. Results of the PVT project differed in numbers from the official SEC's results only in one constituency and only for one mandate. This error can be accounted by the standard error. Results of the PVT project were also the first results that were declared on the national television and radio, before the results of the State Election Committee were announced.

» COOPERATION WITH INSTITUTIONS

Cooperation goal — to provide citizens with accurate and complete information

GONG posters were put up at polling stations as a part of official election material bringing to attention important rules referring to elections

During the election campaign GONG cooperated with a number of institutions in order to provide citizens with as accurate information as possible, to explain and facilitate the voting procedure, to regulate some vague issues in connection with election legislation, but also to present GONG's activities.

GONG attended sessions of the State Election Committee and also made suggestions and comments regarding the Rules on the Rights and Duties of NGO Observers and the SEC's Reminder for the Operation of Polling Committees. Posters were made and distributed in cooperation with the SEC and they were put up at polling stations as a part of official election material bringing to attention important rules referring to elections.

After negotiating with the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Local Self-Government, in October 2003, checking one's status in voters' list was made simpler. Citizens could check their status via phone or at the web site www.pravosudje.hr. In addition, voters were able to temporarily remove themselves from their voters' list via fax and register into the voters' list in the place where they will happen to be on the Election Day. Phone and fax numbers of all general administrative offices could be found on the web site. The Ministry also issued two sets of instructions for the use of general administrative offices in all counties. The instructions referred to voters' lists and election administration. GONG tried to provide voters with as much information as possible about the procedures for exercising their right to vote, especially in connection with the voters who were not present in their place of permanent residence on the Election Day.

In order to ensure that the preparations for the Election Day and the placement of observers will be carried out in time GONG arranged with the City Institute for Automatic Data Processing (GZAOP) that necessary information such as candidacy lists, lists of polling stations, etc. will be delivered in digital form.

The campaign, the election legislation and the election process were presented to the members of the OSCE Mission to Croatia on several occasions and 9 meetings were held in regional offices with OSCE's long-term observers.

» POST-ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Reporting and thank you letters

A Preliminary Report was issued on November 24 and one month later a Final Report. Reports contained general information about the elections, as well as GONG's assessment of the elections and occasional violations of election silence.

Forms delivered by observers were analyzed, information on appeals and objections filed to the SEC was gathered, and the analysis of election results in polling stations based on SEC's and GZAOP's data was issued.

Letters of thanks were presented to observers on 7 gatherings organized for observers, donors, various firms and the media. Observers who were not present (but who had handed in the forms) were sent thank you letters by mail.

Information about donations were gathered and evaluation seminar about the campaign was held.

Homogeneity in connection with GONG's idea and mission

As the campaign was very broad and implemented in a short time framework, the achieved results were more than excellent

GONG carried out two big projects (Election Campaign and "I Vote for the First Time") in a very short time. Since the projects were overlapping in time-line and stuff, it was decided that the projects evaluations would be connected. Success was to be evaluated considering the existing resources and the objectives established at the beginning of the projects. Special attention was to be given to the relations between co-workers, the processes and the results of the projects.

Evaluation workshop was conducted from December 12 to December 14, 2003. Apart from independent evaluator Tea Skokic, there were 54 participants in the workshop, that is, the staff from the Head office, four regional offices (Zagreb, Zadar, Slavonski Brod and Rijeka) and GONG trainers.

Before the workshop was conducted a questionnaire was made and distributed to everyone who took part in the projects. The questionnaire consisted of questions referring to points of satisfaction and points of discontent, clarity of instructions and communication during the preparation and carrying-out of the project, as well as recommendations or issues they would like to discuss in the workshop. 58 questionnaires were returned (10 from the Head office, 13 from the regional offices and 35 from GONG trainers). Analysis of the responses showed that co-workers were focused on their relations, which were often described as unsatisfactory or unprofessional in some segments, especially between trainers and the regional offices.

Relations between trainers working as partners in teams were usually described as supportive and stimulating, and the Head office's relations with trainers and the regional offices were usually graded positive. However when the participants described the particular situations that caused discontent it became obvious that bad relations were the result of unclear division of tasks between regional offices and trainers, as well as vagueness of some procedures in the project, that is, the process. It is also significant that the project was accompanied by very extensive publications and materials which contained precise instructions for trainers regarding their task and how they have to complete it.

Participants in the evaluation seminar worked in groups to discuss the preconditions that ensured the success of the project and the preconditions that lead to failure. They singled out the points of successful planning that facilitated the carrying-out of the project, and the situations that lead to disagreements in particular segments of the project. Issues and questions from the previous stage were used to offer the participants a possibility to suggest and work out solutions by themselves. The last stage of the workshop was a discussion dealing with the possibility of implementing the suggested solutions. The Head and regional offices used the suggestions to consider short-term and long-term strategies of implementing some of the solutions.

maintained and developed throughout the year as a long-term plan. It is possible to conduct a public opinion poll about GONG and talk to former volunteers and observers to determine the presence of the organization in the society and its public profile. Gathered results could serve as guidelines for future work with volunteers and observers.

- **Communication and reorganization of tasks** - although communication and unclear division of tasks were already pointed out as major problems in carrying-out of the Election Campaign project, it seems that minor changes in organization would solve the problem. Greater independence of the regional offices and the transfer of organizational activities on them would facilitate communication. Setting up a separate call centre just before the next elections would make the offices more efficient. This would make office phone lines less busy and ensure normal everyday running of the office.
- **Evaluation** - next evaluation workshop should not be carried out with such a large group and in such a short execution period. Indicators of evaluation should be included in planning future activities in order to facilitate evaluation of the project and its carrying-out.

The following recommendations were put into prominence:

- **Selecting and preparing trainers** - in preparatory training more attention should be given to strengthening the teams and to real-life situations, instead of formal rules. It would be good to start developing the atmosphere of partnership between regional team and trainers as early as on the preparatory meeting.
- **Strengthening the regional offices** - the regional offices should conduct several training courses with the subject of strengthening teamwork, organizational development and evaluation. Also, they should become familiar with the work of other nongovernmental organizations in the region and make contacts with other groups that might help in future projects. Regional offices also need training in models of positive management, needs assessment and conflict resolution.
- **Working with volunteers and observers** - should be

Despite the discontents with certain elements of the projects, all participants showed a high level of homogeneity in connection with GONG's idea and mission. Most participants showed a high level of identification with the organization and the sense of relevance and proud of the work and results. The regional offices proved to be the weakest link. Their role between the professional and experienced staff of the Head office and a large number of trainers is not completely defined.

The Election Campaign project was evaluated as successful although the overall opinion is that certain changes in planning and organization of work are necessary in the future.

As the campaign was very broad and implemented in a short time framework, the achieved results were more than excellent. Nevertheless, the problems defined at the evaluation seminar were largely due to shortness of deadlines and workload that needed to be performed. In that sense, all recommendations that came out of the evaluation will be used as pointers in preparation of future campaigns.

PREDSJEDNICA GONG-a SUZANA JAŠIĆ POZVALA NA TOLERANCIJU

Prijetnje aktivistima GONG-a u Slavoniji i Dalmaciji

Građani javljaju s terena o teškoćama nekih od oko tri tisuće promatrača

ZAGREB - Predsjednica GONG-a Suzana Jašić jučer je rekla da u nekim dijelovima Slavonije i zaleđu Splita ima pojava da se prijeti članovima biračkih odbora koje su imenovale tamošnje oporbene stranke.

- Građani su nam se javili ili anonimno ili su nam dali imena ali su zatražili diskreciju jer žive u maloj lokalnoj sredini pa se boje. Zbog toga nismo u javnosti izašli priopćenjem i ne možemo biti konkretniji, rekla je Jašić na konferenciji za novinare GONG-a čijih će oko tri tisuće promatrača zajedno s 63 mobilne ekipe nadgledati tijek izbora.

Dodala je da je bilo prijetnji i nekim njihovim promatračima, te pozvala građana da im dojavu sve takve pojave, ali i da stanu iza svojih riječi kako bi GONG mogao obavijestiti javnost i poslati svoje mobilne ekipe na teren.

- Zamolila bih građane da poštuju demokraciju. Netolerancijom prema drugima udaljujemo se od Europe. Tako nećemo biti ni na Balkanu koji će nas uskoro preći. Hrvatsvo se ne mjeri po tome koliko je netko glasan nego koliko po-



Suzana Jašić, glasnogovornica GONG-a Ivana Bajsić, Danijela Trbović-Viajki, Miljenko Jergović i Željko Mavrović

štuje zakone ove zemlje i koliko se civilizirano ponaša, rekla je Jašić.

Dodala je da je GONG zatražio od OESS-a da njihovih deset mobilnih ekipa ipak izađu na teren i promatraju tijek izbora. Jašić je dodala da građani na birališta ne moraju donijeti takozvane

»rezance« jer to nije nikakav uvjet da bi mogli glasovati. Građane su na glasovanje pozvali poznata televizijska voditeljica i kolumnistica našeg lista Danijela Trbović, književnik Miljenko Jergović, te nekadašnji boksač, a sadašnji poduzetnik Željko Mavrović.

Z. CRNČEC

• The article about the press conference with famous individuals, Novi list, November 23, 2003

CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Campaign was financially supported only by foreign donors

This campaign was financially supported by: USAID through National Democratic Institute (NDI) with the amount of 250,000 USD or 1,633,171.75 Kn, Canadian Embassy in Zagreb with the amount of 229,385.46 Kn, OSCE Mission in Croatia with the amount of 30,754.90 EUR or 208,183.18 Kn and, by financing GONG's annual activities, British Embassy with the amount of 193,919.72 Kn.

Itemized Statement of Project Expenses	Kn	USD
1. Salaries and expenses		
a) Employees	240,174.41	40,029.07
b) Field coordinators (trainers)	50,730.00	8,455.00
2. Office supplies and Equipment	28,405.82	4,734.30
3. Office rent and Utilities	16,618.08	2,769.68
4. Communication costs and Postage	67,183.77	11,197.30
5. Travel expenses		
a) Training and evaluation expenses	45,445.41	7,574.24
b) Election Day costs	63,978.68	10,663.11
c) Campaign activities	89,812.85	14,968.81
6. Material production		
a) Audio-clips	81,300.00	13,550.00
b) Video clips	299,895.89	49,982.65
c) Media campaign	312,539.72	52,089.95
d) Brochures	229,385.32	38,230.89
e) Brochure insert	177,136.55	29,522.76
f) Other material (posters, T-shirts, manuals etc.)	513,967.42	85,661.24
7. Other expenses	17,039.56	2,839.93
TOTAL:	2,233,559.43	372,268.93

Exchange rate: 1 USD = 6 kn

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS

Campaign was in-kind supported by number of domestic institutions, firms, media and citizens

Most importantly, without huge discounts and free air time in the media campaign, as well as free premises for observers' trainings and other kind of donations, it would not have been possible to implement this campaign with the described intensity.

In-kind supporters (in Kn)	Value
to 1,000	to 30,000
Pharos fotokopirnica, Zadar	Local self-government and institutions
Studio 1, Zadar	
ABC grafika, Zadar	to 40,000
	IREX ProMedia
to 2,000	
Megatrend d.o.o., Zagreb	to 50,000
	ATV, Split
do 3,000	
MC Glas Slavonije	to 100,000
	Moslavina Television d.o.o, Kutina
to 4,000	Kanal RI, Rijeka
Glas Istre	
to 6,000	to 250,000
Vecernji list	Local radio stations
to 10,000	to 500,000
Slobodna Dalmacija	Open Television, Zagreb
	to 5,100,000
	Croatian Radio-Television

THANK YOU ALL!