



STATEMENT OF SENATOR PAUL SIMON, SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR MONITORING OF THE CROATIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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Croatia has experienced a free but not fair election. While candidates were able to speak freely, the process leading up to the election was fundamentally flawed. It did not meet the minimum standards for democracies. By contrast the election itself was -- with some exceptions - conducted efficiently.

To achieve both a free and fair election in the future, we recommend to the governance and the people of Croatia:

- 1) Television and radio time should be carefully balanced between the major candidates,
- 2) The Election Commission should be composed of representatives of the major political parties,
- 3) Eligibility for voting for those not living in Croatia should be reviewed in line with OSCE standards and the Dayton treaty, as well as to assure fraud-free voting and voting without ethnic bias,
- 4) Billboards paid for by the government, which feature the exploits or image of any candidate should not appear within 90 days before an election,
- 5) Properly authenticated domestic observers should be welcomed along with international observers,
- 6) Some balance in financial resources of the major candidates should be attained,
- 7) The major candidates in the next election should consider having televised debates, a practice now followed in most democracies.

There is a clear desire on the part of the people of Croatia to be a more integral part of Europe. That is possible, but it is not likely to be fully achieved unless two conditions are met: first, fully free and fair elections; and second, a strong indication that the days of ethnic prejudice are relics of the past.

I am grateful to the people of Croatia for their warmth and hospitality and I wish the best to them, and their re-elected President.