

REPORTS

REGIONAL AND ASSOCIATION NEWS

ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ELECTION OFFICIALS (ACEEEO)



With the assistance of IFES, the ACEEEO is continuing its ongoing professional projects—the Media and Elections project, the firstvoter.eu project, the Money and Politics (MAP) program and the Professional Election Dictionary. As called for in its mission, it is

planning to organize election observation missions in its member states. Other activities contemplated in the coming months include a project to prepare member states for European Parliament elections, an e-voting project and a project to enhance election security. Preparations are underway for the association's annual conference in September, on the theme of "Media and Elections." Organizational aims for 2003 include following up with the ACEEEO's continuing application for consultative status at the UN; cooperation with IFES, the OSCE-ODIHR and International IDEA; setting up sub-regional offices of the ACEEEO Secretariat; consolidating its financial basis; reinforcing project activity; improving the operation of the Documentation Center; and preparing for becoming a pan-European organization. For more information about any ACEEEO activities, or to receive regular updates, please visit www.aceeeo.org or contact the Secretariat at aceeeo@axelero.hu.

ASSOCIATION OF ELECTION OFFICIALS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (AEOBiH)

After more than two years of working under the auspices of IFES, the Association of Election Officials of BiH became a self-supporting, independent non-governmental organization (NGO) at the end of February 2003. The organization will continue to receive sub-grant funds from IFES during a transition period through the end of August 2003. During the first quarter of 2003, the AEOBiH published a new issue of its *Elections* newsletter, the proceedings of the AEOBiH Fourth Annual Conference, and a Technical Series publication, *Retrospective of Elections*, containing information on elections in BiH from 1990 to 2002. The AEOBiH was also awarded a public advocacy project on "Establishing a Legal Basis for Funding Elections and the Work of Election Bodies," which will be implemented over the next nine months and should help



solve the problem of financing elections before the municipal elections in 2004. The support of AEOBiH members is extremely important during this sensitive period, when only three staff members are working on the critical challenge of becoming a self-sustaining organization.

UNITED STATES FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (FEC)



The Commission approved new and revised campaign finance reporting forms and software that conform to the revised reporting requirements of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002. Revised forms may be accessed on the Commission's web site at www.fec.gov/reporting.html. Reporting software may

be downloaded at www.fec.gov/elecfil/electron.html. The Commission also scheduled five training conferences to help political committees affected by the BCRA to learn the new requirements. With regard to electoral reform, the FEC's Office of Election Administration met with numerous federal, state and local government officials to review requirements in new legislation affecting the administration of federal elections and to discuss implementation strategies. The Commission also launched a special Web page to address the Help America Vote Act of 2002 at www.fec.gov/hava/hava.htm. This page will be updated with more information about the law, which establishes minimum federal standards for voter registration and voting processes and authorizes federal funds to assist states in procuring new voting equipment and in improving the administration of elections. The legislation authorizes the transfer of the Office of Election Administration to a new agency, the Election Assistance Commission, and requires that agency to publish guidance and studies on a variety of election administration matters.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS, RECORDERS, ELECTION OFFICIALS AND TREASURERS (IACREOT)

IACREOT will hold its 32nd Annual Conference at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Denver, Colo., from July 29 to August 3, 2003. More 750 delegates, guests and vendors are expected to attend. President Maryanne Rickenbach (Norristown, Pa.) and Host Chair Myrna Rodenberger (Fort Collins, Colo.) have sent out the Call to Conference to all members of the organization. More than 15 hours of classroom education



and special seminars are planned. The IACREOT Trade Show, the largest of its kind in the United States, will once again showcase the latest in election technology. Chair Peggy Sparks (Houston, Texas) has sold more booths than at any time in our brief history; more than 100 booths will be on display.

There will be a detailed seminar on the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) at the conference, in addition to a seminar on the implementation of new electronic voting systems. Much of the concern among local election officials involves the possibility that the mandates of the legislation will not be adequately funded, leaving the fiscal responsibility to local governments.

In addition IACREOT was represented at the second GEO Conference, held in Mexico City in March 2003, by Tony Sirvello, who invited delegates to the IACREOT Conference. Many are likely to attend and contribute to the annual seminar on international elections. Anyone interested in attending the IACREOT Conference may contact Mr. Sirvello at 1.800.890.7368 or 713.789.1887, by email at tjsthree@msn.com, or by regular mail at 2400 Augusta Drive, Suite 250, Houston, TX 77057.

PACIFIC ISLANDS, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATORS NETWORK (PIANZEA)



The Federated States of Micronesia had their first national general elections using the generic Voter Registration System (VRS) in March of this year. The VRS was originally deployed as a pilot in the state of Pohnpei in 2000/2001. In 2002 the system was adopted nationally, converting eight separate manual voter lists into one shared computerized list. Benefits of the system include: electors only need to register once, EMBS have the ability to identify and remove duplicate and deceased electors, and EMBS have the ability to control, interrogate and use the registration data. Staff at the Electoral Commission of Pohnpei said complaints about the voter lists were dramatically reduced. In fact only one complaint was lodged.

The newly appointed Ombudsman for Fiji and former Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Walter Rigamoto, has been working in East Timor as a United Nations consultant providing advice to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on electoral legislation. East Timor has its first local government elections scheduled for later this year. The establishment of an EPIC Hub within the PIANZEA Secretariat is now well underway. Stage two of the process, the research to verify the initial surveys, is currently taking place. A French-speaking researcher has been contracted to undertake the research for Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES OF STATE (NASS)

SWEEPING REFORMS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY SYSTEM
by Kay Albowicz

Election insiders predict the number of states moving their primary dates forward to increase their influence in the nominating process could reach extraordinary levels in 2004. At least 11 states are currently considering earlier dates for next year's presidential primaries. A handful of states frustrated by this frontloading phenomenon are on the verge of canceling their '04 primaries altogether.



The collective rush to gain a louder voice in the process is actually undermining it by creating a longer campaign season and a more disengaged electorate. In 1984, only eight states held their primaries before the end of March. That number may jump to 28 in 2004. In 2000, the frontloading phenomenon led to a huge clumping of contests on March 7, Mega Tuesday. In 2004, the equivalent date could be one month earlier, on February 3.

NASS is campaigning for the adoption of its Regional Rotating Primary Plan for 2008. Under the plan, party primaries would be grouped by region with the East in March, followed by the South in April, the Midwest in May, and the West in June. In the 2012 cycle, the regions would rotate, with the South moving into first followed by the Midwest, West and East. As part of a compromise, Iowa and New Hampshire would retain their leading positions in the presidential selection process. NASS will be working with groups like IFES, the Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislators and the Republican and Democratic parties to promote the adoption of the primary reform plan. For more information, see www.nass.org.

Kay Albowicz is Director of Communications at the National Association of Secretaries of State.