



*Release of Nations in Transit 2007*  
**Governance Crisis in Central Europe:**  
*Is the Democratic Consensus Eroding?*

*Thursday 14, June, 2007, 10:00-11:30,*  
*Council of Europe – European Youth Center, Zivatar u. 1-3, 1024 Budapest*

## **Nations in Transit 2007**

# **COUNTRY SUMMARIES**

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Each country summary includes an overall direction denoted by: ↑ (improves) ↓ (worsens) — (stays the same), summary, and any rating changes.

The Democracy Score represents an average of subcategory ratings for electoral process, civil society, independent media, national democratic governance, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption. *Nations in Transit* ratings and scores are based on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic development and 7 the lowest.

## **EU 8**

### **Czech Republic —**

Despite a deadlocked political environment and an absent government for much of 2006, the country continued apace in some areas of reform priorities. **The democracy score remains 2.25.**

The country's inability to form a government in the five months following June elections led to essentially no government, impacted basic reform decisions, and demonstrated the depth of political partisanship present in the country. Parliamentary elections were competitive and well-run, with the Green Party entering parliament for the first time, while the system continued to provide little opportunity for new parties or the Roma minority. The press reverted to biased political coverage and political polarization during and after the elections. The licensing of digital TV was again delayed after complaints led the Prague municipal court to overturn the issuance decision. October elections brought vibrant competition on the local level, and the overall system of local government registered continued improvement, most notably in education. A high-profile dispute between the chairwoman of the Supreme Court and the President reaffirmed judicial independence, and a number of judicial appointments and hiring of needed judicial administration workers suggested that the government was becoming more serious about its proposed reforms.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-czech-republic-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-czech-republic-proof-ii.pdf)

### **Estonia —**

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Estonia continued to slowly bring legislation and practice into line with EU regulations. The most notable happening was the beginning of a new generation of leadership with the election of President Ilves. President Ilves brings both a younger perspective as well as a change in the dynamics between the presidency and parliament with his close ties to the Social Democratic Party, which he helped to re-develop.

**The democracy score remains at 1.96.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/estonia\\_not%20final%20ed.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/estonia_not%20final%20ed.pdf)

### **Hungary ↓**

Hungary experienced a crisis of confidence in its leadership and its government institutions leaving it with a **democracy score which worsens from 2.00 to 2.14.**

Political parties used affiliated civil society groups in their campaigns, and the autumn brought the sudden appearance of a number of groups are opposed to the fundamental principles of liberal democracy. In April 2006, elections contained elements of electoral fraud as well as deliberate misinformation about the state of the economy as put forward by the ruling Social-liberal coalition. The prime minister's mishandling of the governmental crisis in September as well as the creation of a Development Cabinet outside the government structure weakened the institutions and overall government consensus.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-hungary-proof-i.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-hungary-proof-i.pdf)

### **Latvia —**

Overall Latvia has secured most of the requisites for a functioning consolidated democracy even as 2006 saw more public Euro-skepticism and apathy for Latvia's future. Setbacks and improvements balanced each other out in 2006, **leaving the democracy score at 2.07.**

Despite the OSCE declaring the October Parliamentary elections "administered transparently and professionally in a competitive and pluralistic environment", major distortions in electoral spending gave certain parties an advantage, indicating unfair pre-election rules. Voter turnout further declined from 71 percent to 62 percent. The Anti-corruption organization (KNAB) improved its methods and more actively investigated 'big fish', including potential mayoral-level vote rigging in the 'Jurmagate' scandal, the activities of the oligarch and former mayor of Ventspils, and dismissal of high level judges, making the organization one of the most trusted institutions in Latvia.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-latvia-proofed1.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-latvia-proofed1.pdf)

### **Lithuania ↓**

Several months of political turbulence and the emergence of a minority led government did little to put into place active mechanisms for judicial reform or to inspire public participation in civil society. **The democracy score worsens in 2006 from 2.21 to 2.29.**

A lack of interest and confidence in NGOs, low public outreach of civil society groups and their unstable financial basis has led to continued nonparticipation in Lithuania's civil society. In 2006, a new tax took affect, charging Lithuania's non-profits a 15-percent tax on commercial proceeds exceeding an established level. Recurrent institutional problems expose weaknesses in the country's legal system. Despite reform efforts in 2006, lack of material improvements from the recent civil and criminal law were evident and fed the persistent critical public mistrust of courts.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-lithuania-proofed1.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-lithuania-proofed1.pdf)

#### **Poland ↓**

The change in government dominated by the “twins” seems to have brought a reversal of some previously agreed checks and balances within the institutions and society causing an **overall worsening of the democracy score from 2.14 to 2.36.**

Concentration of power under the executive without sufficient checks and balance dominated the new government with such actions as dissolving the civil service corps, controversial lustration policies, and consolidation of the division of EU Regional Funds under the PM rather than regional councils. Last minute changes to the election law allowing for the transfer of minority seats to stronger parties were made without proper consultation. Increased government pressure on civil society through official statements and actions was particularly felt by gay rights organizations. The government demonstrated its intent to pressure public service media by replacing the heads of all state owned media, criticizing anti-president satire, putting forward ‘wild lustration’ of media people, and giving preference to Catholic and conservative media groups. Perception of the prevalence of corruption has fallen among citizens primarily due to the work of the newly organized Central Anticorruption Agency, closure of the last unreformed secret service agency, and continued prosecution of a number of high profile cases.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-poland-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-poland-proof-ii.pdf)

#### **Slovakia ↓**

Slovakia continued its reform process through the first half of the year, however the instillation of a new government comprised of coalition partners from the pre-1998 era suggested that the democratic reform gains made in the past eight years might be somewhat challenged in 2007. **The democracy score worsens from 1.96 to 2.14.**

The newly elected government coalition of parties exhibited overly partisan interest in concentrating power through a number of key political appointments and through adopting measures to curb independent regulatory institutions. Voter participation in parliamentary elections held in early June declined. Cooperation between civil society and the new government decreased with less willingness to engage NGOs in policy formation. The new government announced its intention to change NGO's favorable taxation status. In its statements and actions the executive displayed its interest to curb the independence of the courts; the new minister of justice removed a number of court chairmen without clear reason, and vacant constitutional court

seats were filled with political rather than professional considerations in the fall. The new minister of justice attempted to abolish the Special Court and Special Attorney's Office which had been successfully investigating corruption and organized crime. The new government's efforts to increase government regulation in certain sectors threatened to increase corruption. The minister of agriculture in the new government was charged with corruption, but was supported by the government, and resigned only after the media covered the scandal.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-slovakia.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-slovakia.pdf)

#### **Slovenia ↓**

Slovenia became the first of the new EU countries to adopt the Euro in 2007. At the same time, both the courts and the government interfered in the freedom of the press. Protection and advocacy for minorities failed to improve, rather the attack on a Roma family in the village of Ambrus demonstrated insufficient government and civil society response. The trend of court decisions against journalists goes against the logic of free speech and press. At the same time, the ruling government parties demonstrated their influence over major media. Due to declining trends in civil society and independent media, **the 2006 democracy score worsens from 1.75 to 1.82.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/slovenia%20ex%20su.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/slovenia%20ex%20su.pdf)

## **NEW EU**

#### **Bulgaria ↑**

The year saw power change hands on local as well as national levels as the country concentrated on improving its outstanding EU requirements in the areas of judicial reform and the fight against corruption. A number of attempts to interfere in media independence occurred in 2006 with attacks on journalists, combined with media self-censorship. Despite losing a number of funding sources, civil society continued to play a vibrant role in Bulgaria. The constitution was amended to introduce more transparency and accountability in the judiciary; a new prosecutor general was appointed who took on a comprehensive review of all prosecutors, the Ombudsman gained the right to petition the constitutional court, and the licensing of private enforcement firms improved implementation of court decisions. **The democracy score improves from 2.93 to 2.89.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-bulgaria-final.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-bulgaria-final.pdf)

#### **Romania ↑**

Romania continued to strengthen institutions in its bid to enter the EU in 2007. This was enhanced by a vibrant civil society and a set of media activities aimed at holding the government to its commitments. While media ownership concentration increased in 2006, investigative journalists actively focused on the government. A Law on mediation was passed in May 2006. Judges displayed independence in a number of critical cases as well as some procedural

improvements in the functioning of the judiciary. The Anti-corruption office managed to investigate and prosecute a number of high level officials on corruption charges.

**The democracy score improves from 3.39 to 3.29**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/romania\\_final.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/romania_final.pdf)

## BALKANS

*NOTE: In Nations in Transit 2007, Freedom House provides separate ratings for Serbia and Kosovo in order to provide a clearer picture of processes and conditions in the different administrative areas. Doing so does not indicate a position on the part of Freedom House regarding on Kosovo's future status.*

### Albania ↓

Albania experienced a few setbacks in its consolidation of democratic institutions in 2006, especially in the areas of national democratic governance and electoral process, with some improvements in both judicial framework and independence and corruption. The new center-right government elected in December 2005 made numerous attempts to consolidate its power around the prime minister, off-setting the balance of other branches and due process, related to charges against the general prosecutor, cleansing the civil service without due process, and other anti-corruption initiatives. Partisan politics of the new government and opposition failed to produce necessary election law and commission revisions, despite January 2007 local elections. The constitutional court displayed its independence in ruling that judges could keep posts in the High Council of Justice. The PM's political will has made some advances despite lacking a satisfactory institutional framework, but overall **the democracy score worsened in 2006 from 3.79 to 3.82.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-albania-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-albania-proof-ii.pdf)

### Bosnia and Herzegovina ↑

BiH focused on the key administrative reforms necessary to begin the EU SAA process, with some success on the national level including defense reform. Implementing police reform and agreeing on constitutional reform of Dayton remained elusive. On a positive note, greater engagement and cooperation of NGOs like the Center for Civic Initiatives, GROZD, and DOSTA with policy makers improved citizens' understanding and access to state institutions. **The democracy score improved slightly from 4.07 to 4.04.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/bosnia\\_line%20edited\\_office%20reviewed.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/bosnia_line%20edited_office%20reviewed.pdf)

### Croatia ↓

Croatia continued its reform process towards EU standards and accession across its institutions, but most efforts have produced slow results as the country continues to struggle with its war time legacies. The continued concentration and commercialization of print media in particular weakened the overall level of media professionalism and investigative journalism. The scandal over the appointment of the new head of the state news agency, HINA, demonstrated the

continuing governmental and political influence over media outlets. **The democracy score worsened slightly from 3.71 to 3.75**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-croatia-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-croatia-proof-ii.pdf)

#### **Kosovo -**

The final decision on the status of Kosovo dominated all aspects of Kosovar society in 2006. At the same time, the government demonstrated stability in maintaining at least basic standards despite a dramatic set of events in the central government including the death of the Rugova, the forced resignation of the speaker of the parliament, and the creation of ministry of interior and justice. **The democracy score holds at 5.36.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/kos%20ex%20su.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/kos%20ex%20su.pdf)

#### **Macedonia -**

Macedonia continued to focus on passing legislation for government-wide reforms as outlined in both the Ohrid Agreement and EU Accession process, with most implementation still to be tested. Despite some improvements to the electoral system, voter turnout drastically declined in 2006. Estimates suggested that the civil sector lacks capacities and consistent funding. Reform also focused on the judiciary long plagued by lengthy proceedings. In 2006, the European Court of Human Rights noted four such violations for lengthy proceedings. **The democracy score remains at 3.82.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/macedonia%20ex%20su.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/macedonia%20ex%20su.pdf)

#### **Montenegro ↓**

Montenegro became independent in 2006, satisfactorily completing referendum, parliamentary and local elections, but with most energy focused on the process of establishing the legal state rather than extensive reforms of its institutions. Transformation of state television into public television stalled with clear signs that the public service broadcaster remains under political control. Manipulated elections of representatives to the Council and Managing Board of the state television were notable in 2006. Local elections allowed direct election of mayors in the remaining 14 of 21 municipalities, and polarization between political blocs that previously hampered local and local-national political cooperation lessened with a series of agreements.

The parliament approved a Law on Communal Taxes to go into effect January 2007. While amendments to the Public Procurement law should improve transparency, the parliament failed to amend the flawed Conflict of Interest Law or to follow through meaningfully on any of its charges against high profile officials. **The democracy score worsens from 3.89 to 3.93**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-montenegro-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-montenegro-proof-ii.pdf)

#### **Serbia ↑**

2006 was an extremely eventful year for Serbia including the dissolution of Serbia and Montenegro, enactment of the new Serbian constitution, Kosovo final status efforts, ICTY

cooperation and ongoing SAA talks. Despite all of these challenges, Serbia did make some progress in the reform process, primarily on finalizing the Serbian constitution. Serbia acted responsibly during the referendum process of independence of Montenegro, and put in place a new constitution, despite less than effective ICTY cooperation and a stalemate on the status of Kosovo. The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RBA) ruling on the distribution of national frequencies caused an outcry from the Association of Journalists, Minister of Information and the OSCE, especially after the nighttime closure of BK TV by special police forces. The OSCE also criticized amendments to the Law on Broadcasting. Journalists continued to face threats and attacks. The government stepped up its efforts to investigate institutional corruption, including investigating the operations of MOBTEL and business tycoon Bogoljub Karic, as well as suspending immunity of other high level officials charged with corruption. Despite some flaws, a new Law on Party Financing will oblige reporting of all campaign expenses exceeding 75 euro. As a result of developments in national democratic governance and corruption, **the democracy score improves from 3.71 to 3.68.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/serbia%20ex%20su.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/serbia%20ex%20su.pdf)

## THE CAUCASUS

### Armenia ↓

Little progress was made on redistributing power amongst government branches. Rather, consolidation of political power in the ruling party and elites paved the way for a continued grip on political and economic power during 2007 parliamentary elections. The government's failure to investigate allegations of fraud during the 2005 referendum, and its inability to produce legislation putting into effect approved amendments, demonstrated the lack of political will to improve governance in Armenia. While media organizations were partially successful in influencing a change in Armenia's licensing regime and a new regulatory body, accelerated attacks on journalists suggested an increasingly difficult media environment in the run up to 2007 elections. **The democracy score worsens from 5.14 to 5.21.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-armenia-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-armenia-proof-ii.pdf)

### Azerbaijan ↓

In 2006, Azerbaijan began enjoying the profits of the BTC pipeline project, and accordingly the president was able to maintain his political and economic control over most aspects of the country's institutions. International pressure for reform brought some level of technical compliance, even as further crackdowns on oppositional forces in the media and civil society continued. Civil society faced harassment in the form of student expulsions, police detainment, registration, taxes, and funding. Independent media also faced threats and pressure, especially with the closure of ANS TV and ANS CM radio. **The democracy score worsens from 5.93 to 6.00.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/azerbaijan\\_not%20final%20ltrs%20ed.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/azerbaijan_not%20final%20ltrs%20ed.pdf)

## Georgia ↑

Progress continued in reforms on almost all levels, despite persisting concern over the amount of power resting with the president and his advisors. Legislation on public financing of political parties and free TV time for campaigning before the October local elections created a more level playing field for political parties even as opposition parties remained weak. The Media Council began issuing judgments on specific cases to enforce professional standards among journalists, and the government stopped local authorities in their attacks on journalists in a number of cases. New independent local government institutions as outlined in December 2005 legislation were formed after conducting relatively free and fair local elections in October. Public perception of anticorruption efforts continues to improve, and the government is becoming more systemized in its efforts. The Customs and Tax Offices were united into a single agency by the end of 2006. Georgia ratified the Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, and several parliamentarians were stripped of their positions after corruption investigations. **The democracy score improves from 4.86 to 4.68.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-georgia.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-georgia.pdf)

## WESTERN CIS (COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES)

### Belarus ↑

In 2006, Belarus continued its path towards consolidated authoritarian rule with presidential elections less than free or fair, increased pressure on civil society and media, and strengthening Lukashenko's grasp on political and economic power. At the same time, despite continued, organized government efforts to limit the functions and establishment of civil society organizations such as denying visas, liquidating organizations, jailing religious leaders and oppositionists, and expelling students, participation in civil society persisted. The slight improvement in civil society brings the first improvement to the democracy score for Belarus in the last decade. **The democracy score improves from 6.71 to 6.68.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-belarus.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-belarus.pdf)

### Moldova —

Reforms were generally stagnant during 2006 with President Voronin further consolidating his power over most aspects of Moldovan society. Opposition forces remained weak and divided, and the media fell heavily under political influence. Improvements in media legislation have yet to see any practical implementation thus far. Furthermore, external relations were limited to pressures from Russia and little to no engagement with the European Union. **The democracy score holds at 4.96.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-moldova-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-moldova-proof-ii.pdf)

### Russia ↓

2006 saw Russia continue on its path towards authoritarian governance as demonstrated with the deterioration of ratings for electoral process, independent media and civil society, and **an overall democracy score downgrade from 5.75 to 5.86**. New legislation limited the opposition's ability to participate in elections and gain significant representation while authorities worked to establish a two-party system between United Russia and Just Russia to gain support for the regime. Efforts to constrain if not completely silence independent media in Russia reached levels of international concern with the murder of investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya. The judicial system, notably the courts, also took part in harassing journalists and censoring the internet. At the same time, a Kremlin-friendly company bought leading newspaper *Kommersant* and replaced the editor, leading to the resignation of key journalists, and closure of its opinion section. A new law on NGOs particularly cracking-down on human-rights related organizations was put in place within an atmosphere of growing xenophobia, leading to laborious reporting requirements.

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-russia-final.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-russia-final.pdf)

#### **Ukraine ↓**

The election of a new parliament in March and the subsequent political stalemate between political camps under the 'dual executive system' dominated much of 2006, leaving little time and energy for further democratic transition and consolidation. Improvements came only in the area of electoral process as the final preparations of election amendments prior to March 26 elections led to the most free and fair elections in Ukraine's history, although holding national, regional, and local elections on the same day created some level of confusion. The constitutional model of governance with dual executive power introduced in 2006 lacked an efficient system of checks and balances and did not bridge the ongoing political divides and power struggle destabilizing national governance structures. The May action plan adoption and subsequent legislation to modernize the judicial framework to European standards met strong resistance from judges for its lack of systematization, and for lack of a corresponding constitutional amendment that would allow proper implementation. **The democracy score worsens from 4.21 to 4.25.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-ukraine-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-ukraine-proof-ii.pdf)

## **CENTRAL ASIA**

#### **Kazakhstan -**

Despite a few symbolic gestures and minor improvements including an active international public relations campaign launched by the government to obtain the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) rotating chair for 2009, further consolidation of power around Nazarbaev and his elites weakened institutions and the ability of society to provide a counterweight. The benefits of Kazakhstan's rapidly growing economy remain within the hands of a small group of kin and clients. Opposition party members continued to face harassment from

not only the leading party, but also from the judiciary which backs the state. **The democracy score remains at 6.39.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-kazakhstan.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-kazakhstan.pdf)

#### **Kyrgyzstan -**

Political turmoil kept the government primarily focused on its own survival with little reform attempted beyond the crafting of a new constitution. The new constitution signed in November will allegedly provide for a more equal distribution of power between the three branches of government, however many suspect this will only take place after the presidential election of 2010. A number of by-elections in 2006 also raised concern regarding the ability to hold free and fair national elections in the future. Efforts to fight corruption in the beginning of the year showed little progress by year's end. **The democracy score remains at 5.68.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/kyrg\\_line%20edited%26revised.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/kyrg_line%20edited%26revised.pdf)

#### **Tajikistan-**

The OSCE determined that the 2006 elections, although peaceful, took place with a number of violations, further questioning Tajikistan's commitment to democracy. A lack of political will was also visible in the areas of judicial reform and in the inefficiency of the centralized corruption agency established in 2006 to tackle the issue of widespread corruption. Media continued to cater to the state by practicing self-censorship. **The democracy score worsens from 5.93 to 5.96.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/tajikistan\\_not%20ed%20final1.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/tajikistan_not%20ed%20final1.pdf)

#### **Turkmenistan –**

In 2006 Turkmenistan continued its entrenchment into authoritarian isolation. The state continued to promote *Ruhnama*, a two-volume national code of spiritual conduct written by Niyazov, and to regularly replace middle and upper level government officials. Media restrictions remained highly restrictive, and reportedly, a journalist from Radio Liberty was beaten to death while in custody. The very end of the year brought the unexpected death of President Niyazov and signaled the potential for some softening of the regime under its new leader. **The democracy score remains at 6.96.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/nt-turkmenistan-proof-ii.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu//images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/nt-turkmenistan-proof-ii.pdf)

#### **Uzbekistan -**

Further crackdowns on civil society, media and consolidation of political and economic powers around President Karimov have deepened the restrictive environment of Uzbekistan. The national government made no efforts in this year to loosen restrictions adopted after the events in Andijan. Relations with the West continued to decline, calling into question the ability for outside observers to monitor elections scheduled for 2007. Independent media and civil society

activists also faced continued harassment, arrest, and imprisonment. **The democracy score remains at 6.82.**

[http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh\\_galleries/NIT2007/uzbek%20ex%20su2.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.hu/images/fdh_galleries/NIT2007/uzbek%20ex%20su2.pdf)