



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

STATE DUMA ELECTIONS
18 September 2016

OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission
Final Report



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OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an official invitation from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (CEC), on 8 August the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) to observe the 18 September State Duma elections. The mission assessed the compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. On election day, an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) was formed as a common endeavour of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) delegation. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM remained in the country until 27 September to follow post-election day developments.

The Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions issued by the IEOM on 19 September 2016 concluded that “the 18 September State Duma elections were transparently administered by the CEC, while the performance of lower level commissions was uneven. The legal framework can serve as an adequate basis for the conduct of elections, but democratic commitments continue to be challenged and the electoral environment was negatively affected by restrictions to fundamental freedoms and political rights, firmly controlled media and a tightening grip on civil society. The liberalized party registration process has yet to result in distinct political alternatives, and the campaign was low-key. Local authorities did not always treat the contestants equally, and instances of misuse of administrative resources were noted. The election day generally proceeded in an orderly manner, but numerous procedural irregularities were noted during counting.” The voter turnout was announced at 48 per cent.

Since the 2011 State Duma elections, the electoral system was modified from proportional to mixed, the parliamentary threshold was reduced, and independent candidates are now allowed to stand. The legal framework is comprehensive and can serve as an adequate basis for the conduct of elections. However, it remains overly complex and micro-regulates the electoral process, including through unnecessary restrictions on candidate registration, formation of party blocks, campaigning, media and citizen observation.

The election commissions efficiently administered the operational aspects of the elections and met the legal deadlines. The CEC, under the new leadership, worked in a transparent and professional manner earning widespread confidence among election stakeholders prior to election day. A number of lower-level commissions lacked impartiality and independence, and their performance was criticized, including by the CEC. Senior officials of municipal administration served as chairpersons and/or secretaries of a number of lower level commissions, undermining public confidence in the impartiality of the election commissions.

Limited efforts were made to encourage and promote opportunities for women’s participation. Women candidates received marginal news coverage and few were featured in campaign activities. Only 2 of 15 CEC members are women, including its chairperson. Women comprised half of the members and chaired more than half of the election commissions visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM. At 14 per cent, women remain largely under-represented in the newly elected Duma.

¹ The English version of this report is the only official document. An unofficial translation is available in Russian

Most OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of voter registration. Legal restrictions on the right to vote of all prisoners regardless of the gravity of the crime committed are not in line with paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and other international obligations and standards.

The number of registered parties considerably increased after the 2011 elections when the party registration process was liberalized, but some opposition initiatives were not registered. Out of 74 political parties which had the right to participate in the State Duma elections, 20 stood fielding some 8,500 candidates. A total of 14 parties met the legal criteria for registering federal lists without collecting support signatures, and 6 parties registered candidates only in single-mandate constituencies.

The inclusiveness of the candidate registration process was challenged by legal limitations on the right to stand and by excessive registration requirements, particularly for independent candidates, that are contrary to international obligations and standards. Only 23 out of 304 nominees passed the registration requirements. The candidate registration process is overregulated as the law stipulates strict requirements for submission of nomination applications, including a plethora of documents. In addition, the limitation on the number of collected supporting signatures and the verification process that relies on verifying a sample of submitted signatures are not in line with international good practice.

The campaign was overall low-key with the activities of the ruling party generally being the most visible and prevalent. Patriotism was a notable feature of the campaign discourse. The major topics of the campaign were the socio-economic situation, political stability and foreign policy. The four parliamentary parties continued to dominate the political landscape and most contestants did not offer clear political alternatives, which limited voters' choice.

In several regions, administrative resources were misused for campaign purposes. The notification procedure of campaign events was selectively applied by local authorities to effectively deny or condition permission to contestants to hold rallies. There were also attempts by local state structures to influence voter choice and to pressure voters into voting for the governing party. The CEC publicly highlighted such violations reported from nearly half of the federal subjects.

Throughout the campaign, the information on campaign finance, including incomes and expenditures was regularly posted online, but the level of detail varied as the law does not require reporting detailed breakdown. This impacted negatively on the transparency of campaign finance.

Legal requirements prescribing equal coverage of contestants by the media and allotment of free time in state-funded media applied to 30 days before the elections. The free airtime programmes provided voters with access to views of contesting parties and offered some interactive discussions. OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring results show that media failed to grant contestants with equitable coverage, with the ruling party receiving more editorial coverage than other contestants. The vast majority of editorial coverage on national channels – 63 to 91 per cent – was dedicated to government officials, detracting from election-related discussions. Coupled with legal restrictions on campaigning in the media and self-censorship encouraged by the restrictive legal and regulatory framework, this gave undue advantage to the ruling party and limited voters' ability to make a fully informed choice.

The CEC received 1,896 so-called 'applications' concerning alleged violations of electoral legislation. It reviewed 44 complaints in its sessions, in a transparent and collegial manner and in observance of due process guarantees. All other complaints were considered by individual

commission members in a non-transparent process. Most complaints lodged with lower level commissions and district courts related to candidate registration, campaign activities and media-related issues. In most of the cases observed, the adjudication of complaints was in line with the required procedures and established deadlines. The Supreme Court rejected the majority of the 70 appeals received. A number of stakeholders did not pursue appellate procedures explaining this by the lack of trust in the integrity of electoral dispute resolution in the regions.

On election day several lower level commissions handled complaints informally or left them unresolved. In response to allegations of systemic violations and requests for revoking the results of elections in St. Petersburg and Chelyabinsk, the CEC decided that, by law, the decisions of lower level commissions establishing the results of elections can be revoked only by court decision.

OSCE/ODIHR and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly observers could observe without restrictions. The April 2016 amendments introduced unduly restrictive accreditation rules for party and media representatives. Contrary to international standards and commitments, the legislation still does not provide for non-party citizen observation. OSCE/ODIHR EOM could observe the electoral process generally without restrictions.

Election day generally proceeded in an orderly manner, but numerous procedural irregularities were noted during the counting processes. Voting was generally assessed positively by IEOM, despite significant problems with secrecy of the vote. Transparency of the process was negatively affected by election commissions at times not providing the possibility for meaningful observation, especially during counting and tabulation. Contrary to the law, results protocols were not posted for public scrutiny in about a third of counts observed. The CEC reacted to publicly reported violations, including ballot box stuffing and carousel voting.

The CEC started announcing preliminary results on 19 September and approved the final results on the night of 22 September, within the legal deadline. In response to received evidence of election fraud, including video recordings, the CEC cancelled the results in nine polling stations. Shortly before the announcement of results, the Commission discussed alleged irregularities and fraud. The CEC decided to announce final election results without further adjudication of complaints, stating that all the reported irregularities would be reviewed in detail after the elections with the view of ensuring improvements in the future. This negatively impacted on the transparency and integrity of this important stage of the electoral process.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an official invitation from the Russian Federation authorities, and based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 27 June to 1 July 2016, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 8 August to observe the 18 September State Duma elections. The EOM, headed by Ambassador Jan Petersen, consisted of a 16-member core team based in Moscow and 64 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed throughout the country on 17 August.

For election day, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM was joined by a delegation from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Ilkka Kanerva was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and Leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. Marietta Tidei headed the OSCE PA delegation. In total, 482 observers from 44 countries were deployed, including 380 long-term and short-term observers by the OSCE/ODIHR, and an 82-member delegation from the OSCE PA. The

OSCE/ODIHR EOM remained in the Russian Federation until 27 September and followed post-election day developments.

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the election process with OSCE commitments and other international standards and obligations for democratic elections, and with national legislation. This final report follows the Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, which was released at a press-conference in Moscow on 19 September and is available on the OSCE/ODIHR website.²

Elections for legislative bodies and governors, as well as mayoral and municipal elections were held in a number of federal subjects of the Russian Federation (subjects) concurrently with the State Duma elections. They were observed by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM only to the extent they impacted on the conduct of the latter.

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM wishes to thank the authorities for the invitation to observe the elections, as well as the Central Election Commission (CEC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other state and local authorities for their support and co-operation during the course of the EOM. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM also wishes to express its appreciation to political parties, civil society organizations and media representatives for their co-operation, and to embassies of OSCE participating States and international organizations accredited in the Russian Federation for their co-operation and support.

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Russian Federation is a federal presidential republic. Legislative power is exercised by the Federal Assembly, a bicameral body consisting of the Council of the Federation (upper house) and the State Duma (lower house).

Following the 2011 parliamentary elections, four political parties were represented in the State Duma. The governing All-Russian Political Party 'United Russia' (ER) won 238 out of 450 seats.³ The remaining seats went to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF; 92 seats), Fair Russia (SR; 64 seats), and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR; 56 seats). The 2011 elections were followed by demonstrations across the country calling for, among other things, investigation of alleged violations, dismissal of the CEC chairperson and repeat elections.

The 2012 legal amendments liberalized party registration and led to a considerable increase in the number of registered parties.⁴ Notwithstanding, the four parliamentary parties play a major role the political landscape. Some opposition initiatives, such as the Party of Progress, remain unregistered.

Based on an initiative of ER, LDPR and SR to move the election date from 4 December to an earlier date, on 17 June President Vladimir Putin called the elections for 18 September. KPRF and some non-parliamentary parties complained about this rescheduling, as it would impact collection of signatures for registration of candidates and that the campaign would take place in the summer.⁵

² See all [OSCE/ODIHR reports on the Russian Federation](#)

³ Abbreviations for political party names correspond to the Russian language abbreviations.

⁴ The number of political parties increased from 7 in 2011 to 77 in 2016. A total of 74 parties had the right to participate in these elections.

⁵ In July 2015, the Constitutional Court opined that the change was in line with the Constitution, as (i) reasonable periodicity of elections was respected, (ii) shortening the term of the deputies was insignificant, and (iii) ... was announced sufficiently in advance to enable all contestants to prepare for the elections.

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The State Duma elections are primarily regulated by the Constitution, the Law on Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right to Participate in a Referendum (the Law on Basic Guarantees), and the Law on the Election of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (the Law on State Duma Elections). Several other laws and CEC instructions also regulate the elections.

The legal framework is comprehensive and can serve as an adequate basis for the conduct of elections. However, it is often overly complex and micro-regulates the conduct of the electoral process, including through unnecessary restrictions on electoral rights, especially with respect to candidate registration, campaigning, and media coverage. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed a few instances of confusion and inconsistent application of the law; notably, it observed cases where ambiguous legal provisions were applied restrictively, or were consistently interpreted against some opposition parties and candidates.⁶ The procedures for holding campaign events were often applied to effectively deny permission especially to some opposition contestants (see Campaign section).

Consideration should be given to simplifying the legal framework for the elections, especially with respect to the complex and restrictive procedures for candidate registration, campaigning, and media coverage.

The legal framework for elections has been considerably changed since the 2011 State Duma elections, addressing some OSCE/ODIHR recommendations.⁷ The amendments, among others, changed the electoral system and the parliamentary threshold, allowed for independent candidates, and simplified the requirements for political party registration.

Changes did not address a number of previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations. Candidate rights remain restricted due to limitations for persons with dual citizenship or a foreign residency permit, or with expunged criminal record.⁸ Other limitations include restrictions for forming party blocks and for observation by citizen groups. Citizens serving prison sentences cannot vote irrespective of the gravity of the crime,⁹ those declared incapable by a court on grounds of mental disability are denied their right to vote.¹⁰

⁶ For example, a nominee received from Novosibirsk Oblast Subject Election Commission (SEC) a written clarification confirming that he does not need to disclose a prior criminal conviction that has been annulled by an act of amnesty. Despite this, he was later deregistered by a court decision for failing to indicate his prior criminal conviction.

⁷ The electoral legislation was last amended in April 2016.

⁸ In the case *Tanase v. Moldova* (2010), the European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR) held that restrictions on suffrage rights of dual citizens were disproportionate and, thus, contrary to Article 3 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); this restriction is also contrary to Article 17 of the [European Convention on Nationality](#) (signed but not ratified by the Russian Federation). Restrictions on voting rights of those with an expunged criminal record are at odds with the principle of proportionality as provided by paragraph 24 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#).

⁹ On 3 July 2013, the ECtHR ruled in *Anchugov and Gladkov v. Russia* (2013) that the automatic and indiscriminate denial of voting rights of prisoners violates Article 3 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR. On 19 April, the Constitutional Court found ECtHR's ruling incompatible with the Constitution and hence unenforceable. Furthermore, in December 2014, the 1994 Law on the Constitutional Court was amended to give the Court a right to declare decisions of international courts unenforceable.

¹⁰ The Russian Federation has signed and ratified the [2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UN CRPD\)](#). Deprivation of the right to vote on the basis of mental disability is inconsistent with Articles 12 and 29 of the UN CRPD. The evolving case law of the ECtHR considers indiscriminate removal of voting rights, without an individualised judicial evaluation and solely based on a mental disability incompatible with Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 of CRPD; see *Alajos Kiss v. Hungary* (2010).

Restrictions on voter and candidate rights should be reviewed to ensure their proportionality. Restrictions on candidate rights for people with dual citizenship, residency permit in another state, or expunged criminal record should be removed. Restrictions on electoral blocs could be lifted. In line with international obligations, restrictions on the suffrage rights of persons with mental disabilities should be removed, whilst necessary support mechanisms to exercise the right to vote should be provided.

A number of other laws having an impact on the electoral process were recently amended. In May 2015, legal changes gave the authorities the right to declare foreign or international organizations as ‘undesirable’. In addition, the so-called ‘foreign agents legislation’ introduced restrictions on the activities of civil society organizations, including those involved in election observation, receiving foreign funding. Overall, a number of hurdles for effective application of the principles of genuine democratic elections are still in place due to restrictive implementation of the legislation guaranteeing the freedoms of association, assembly and expression.

Authorities should align legislation concerning the freedoms of association, assembly and expression with international standards. The authorities should not interpret the law to limit the basic rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution and international standards.

V. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The State Duma consists of 450 deputies elected for a five-year term.¹¹ The electoral system was changed after the 2011 elections from proportional representation to mixed system. Half of deputies were elected in single-mandate constituencies (SMC) under the first-past-the-post system. The other half of deputies were elected from lists of candidates of political parties in one federal constituency. The law does not prescribe any method promoting the participation of women candidates in elections. A number of OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors stated that the electoral system was changed to benefit the ruling party. The delineation of SMCs was also criticized for lacking public consultation and favouring ER.

The threshold for federal seats allocation was lowered from seven to five per cent of the valid votes. By law, each list should include between 200 and 400 candidates divided into a federal part of not less than 10 candidates and at least 35 regional groups of candidates. The mandates are first allocated to the candidates in the federal part and then distributed among the regional groups, according to the results of these groups in the respective federal subjects.

By law, each subject should contain at least one SMC. As the subjects’ population varies greatly, the equality of the citizens’ voting power is significantly affected. The smallest constituency has some 33,000 voters while the largest has nearly 750,000. A total of 67 SMCs deviate by more than 15 per cent, and 19 deviate by 10 – 15 per cent from the average number of voters per SMC. The law requires the limit of deviation of not more than 10 to 15 per cent of voters only among constituencies established within a subject, a requirement which is respected.

While contradicting the principle of equality of suffrage, the misbalance between subjects could be

¹¹ Four deputies were elected from the constituencies formed on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula where OSCE/ODIHR EOM did not observe as there is no consensus among OSCE participating status concerning its status.

justified by ensuring representation of minorities and sparsely populated regions.¹² Ensuring a more equal voting power would require either a significant increase in the number of constituencies or attaching small subjects to bigger ones.

VI. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The election administration consists of commissions at five levels: CEC, Subject Election Commissions (SEC), Constituency Election Commissions (ConEC), Territorial (*rayon*, city and other) Election Commissions (TEC), and Precinct Election Commissions (PEC).¹³ In total, they comprise nearly 900,000 election officials. The election commissions efficiently administered the operational aspects of the elections and met all legal deadlines.

The current composition of the CEC was appointed six months before the elections. Nine of its 15 members were newly appointed. Two members are women, including the CEC chairperson. The CEC held regular public sessions and its decisions were published on its website in a timely manner. The commissioners openly discussed reported irregularities such as interference of local authorities and instances of pressure on election officials to deliver results in favour of ER.¹⁴ The CEC was open to co-operation with an inclusive range of stakeholders. The chairperson played a central role in ensuring the improvements in the work of the CEC.

Most of competing parties welcomed the increased transparency in the work of the CEC and efforts to conduct credible elections.¹⁵ While there were also critical comments, particularly from civil society activists and independent experts, the transparency and integrity of the CEC have notably improved. Problems, however, materialized during the revision of post-election day complaints and the announcement of results.

The main challenge for the CEC was the performance of lower-level commissions, which was uneven across the country. The CEC made frequent public calls on these commissions to ensure the credibility of the elections and on regional and local officials not to interfere with the electoral process.¹⁶ The CEC reacted to irregularities reported from 39 subjects. The commissioners undertook field visits together with representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the General Prosecutor Office to follow-up on complaints and the CEC chairperson repeatedly stated that information on serious violations can lead to criminal investigations. The CEC reversed several decisions of the SECs and called for resignation of SEC chairpersons in Novgorod and Moscow *oblasts* and St Petersburg city.¹⁷

¹² Section 2.2 of the 2002 [Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law \(Venice Commission\) Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters \(Code of Good Practice\)](#) provides that seats be evenly distributed among constituencies with the permissible departure of not more than 10 to 15 per cent except in special circumstances such as protection of a concentrated minority, sparsely populated administrative entity, etc.

¹³ A total of 365 PECs were established in 145 countries for voters residing out of country.

¹⁴ For example, the CEC discussed a complaint by the KPRF branch of Cherepovets (Vologda *oblast*) that the local administration pressured public employees to obtain specific voting results. In another case, a group of PEC members from Penza (Penza *oblast*) threatened not to take part in the elections because they are pressured to "deceive observers", at risk of losing jobs.

¹⁵ The only notable difference was the LDPR leader stating no confidence in the election administration.

¹⁶ Article 19.2 of the 2002 [Convention on the Standards of Democratic Elections, Electoral Rights and Freedoms in the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States \(CIS Convention\)](#) notes that the State parties undertook an obligation "to ensure creation of independent impartial election bodies, which organize the conduct of democratic, free, fair, genuine and periodic elections in accordance with laws and independent obligations of the state."

¹⁷ In Novgorod on 14 August and in Moscow *oblast* and St Petersburg city on 22 June and 20 April, respectively.

A number of ‘Headquarters’ were set-up by the local apparatus to logistically support TECs and PECs, however, some of them reportedly went beyond their mandate by supporting specific candidates or parties.¹⁸ The CEC chairperson sent letters to all governors warning against illegal practices and interference, including the establishment of such ‘Headquarters’ and stated that this information would be shared with the president.

The law stipulates political plurality of the membership of election commissions. Lower-level commissions are appointed for a five-year term from representatives of eligible political parties, state and local government institutions, previous election commissions and nominees from meeting of voters.¹⁹ SECs are appointed by the legislative body and top executive of the subject, each appointing half of the commissioners. TECs are formed by SECs and PECs by TECs. Party nominees should constitute at least half of the members; state or local officials cannot constitute more than half; one party cannot have more than one member per commission. In addition, contestants in SMCs can appoint members with an advisory vote to commissions at all levels where they compete.²⁰

According to a number of OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors, the appointment of lower-level commissions lacked transparency. They stated that the legal provision allowing ‘meeting of voters’ to propose representatives was often used by the ruling party to nominate their sympathizers. Furthermore, lower-level commissions were perceived by many OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors as affiliated with local governments and the ruling party. Almost all commissions visited by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, except PECs, were located in local government buildings.

Senior officials of municipal administration served as chairpersons and/or secretaries of a number of TECs, challenging public confidence in the impartiality of the election commissions.²¹ According to some OSCE/ODIHR interlocutors, these officials may have played a crucial role in the selection of PEC chairpersons and secretaries, many of whom are state employees, such as teachers or civil servants, who are directly or indirectly subordinate to municipal administration. This potentially may affect the independence of election commissions’ activities and be perceived as influencing their work, thus undermining public confidence in their impartiality.²²

In order to increase the integrity and public confidence in the electoral process, the election administration should be guided by the law and principles of transparency, impartiality and independence foreseen in the law. Additional and effective safeguards should be considered to ensure full impartiality and independence of election commissions from state and local government

¹⁸ For example, the authorities of Pelym, Sverdlovsk *oblast*, established such ‘Headquarters’ led by the head of Pelym municipality and including state employees and ER representatives. Its work plan included the “evaluation of the electoral situation”, and “identification of main opponents and topics of counter-propaganda.”

¹⁹ Parties represented in State, regional and municipal Dumas are eligible to submit the nominations for commission membership. A ‘meeting of voters’ is a group of voters who have a common place of work, residence or study and submit written nominations to an election commission.

²⁰ Some 150,000 commissioners with ‘advisory vote’ were appointed.

²¹ For example in Rostov, the majority of TEC chairpersons were senior officials of municipal administration, mostly Deputy Heads. The majority of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors in Moscow opined that the election commissions “were in the hands of local administration and/or the ruling party”. Stakeholders in Pskov noted that the SEC was “a department of the *oblast* administration”. Similar issues were also noted in Khabarovsk, Krasnodar, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Tumen, Saratov, St. Petersburg and Volgograd. The CEC also noted such instances – see its decision No. [13/100-7](#).

²² Paragraph 20 of the 1996 UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) [General Comment No. 25](#) to the 1966 [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#) requires that “[a]n independent electoral authority should be established to supervise the electoral process and to ensure that it is conducted fairly, impartially and in accordance with established laws which are compatible with the Covenant.” Section II.3.1.b of the Code of Good Practice states that “independent, impartial electoral commissions must be set up at all levels, from the national level to polling station level.”

authorities and to prevent misuse of administrative resources for partisan ends, as required by the law.

The law also provides for a broad access of observers representing parties and candidates. However, except for ER, most of the parties did not have sufficient resources to utilize this opportunity to a large extent.²³

The CEC produced several voter education videos aired on various TV channels. Voter education and campaign materials as well as ballots were printed in minority languages. One of voter education campaign spots focused on informing citizens that any pressure on them to vote for a party or candidate, or pressure to collect an absentee voting certificate (AVC) to vote in a particular place, constitutes a criminal offence. The CEC called upon the citizens to report such malpractices to a CEC hotline. Some OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors opined that violations took place because the perpetrators were confident of their impunity.

Two types of electronic voting equipment were used, although to a limited scale. The first was a ballot scanner built on a ballot box, called KOIB. The voter scanned the filled-in ballot that was retained in the ballot box. A printer connected to the scanner printed the results protocol at the end of election day. Some 5,500 KOIBs were used in 39 subjects. In addition, 711 touch-screen voting machines called KEG were used in 14 subjects.

Overall, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM observers assessed the technical preparations of the election commissions as good. The election administration conducted cascade training of lower-level commissions, which the commissioners evaluated as useful and comprehensive. However, the performance of the PEC members fell short of a satisfactory performance on election day, especially during the counting process.

Almost all commissions visited welcomed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM. Commission meetings, although not announced in advance in most cases, were open to the media and observers. Women comprised half of the members and chaired more than half of the commissions visited.

VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

The right to vote is held by citizens over the age of 18, except those serving a prison term, regardless of the gravity of their crime, or those recognized as incapable by a court on grounds of mental disability. These restrictions are contrary to paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and other international obligations and standards.²⁴ The right to vote for candidates in a SMC additionally requires either a registered permanent residency in that constituency or a temporary residence for at least three months before election day.

More than 110 million of voters were registered, including nearly 2 million abroad. The voter lists are drawn from citizens' residence records maintained by local offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the help of the *GAS Vybory* system – a database developed for storage and exchange of information between election commissions on candidates and voting results. The TECs are responsible for printing the voter lists per precinct and, prior to elections, voters could check their

²³ Around 260,000 party and candidate observers were accredited, with more than one-third coming from ER.

²⁴ Paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that the participating States will “guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens,” while paragraph 24 provides that restrictions on rights and freedoms must be “strictly proportionate to the aim of the law.” Paragraph 14 of the 1996 UNHRC General Comment No. 25 to Article 25 of the ICCPR states that grounds for deprivation of voting rights should be “objective and reasonable.” See also Section I.1.1d of the Code of Good Practice.

registration data either in person at polling stations or online. In general, the existing system of voter registration appears to ensure inclusiveness. Most of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of voter registration.²⁵ The CEC informed that it received 144 complaints regarding mistakes in voter lists.

Following the change of the electoral system, voters residing abroad were arbitrarily assigned to 75 out of 225 SMCs, even though they had no connection with the constituency.²⁶ This solution was criticized by many OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors for potentially skewing the vote in SMCs.

Three days before the elections, separate lists were compiled for voters in hospitals, sanatoriums, detention centers and ‘other places of temporary stay’. It is unclear, however, how many of these voters were removed from the voter lists in their original polling stations to avoid double-registration.²⁷

Voters could also apply for AVCs to vote outside of their place of registered residence, at any polling station in the country, including those established at train stations and airports. A total of 1,246,634 AVCs were distributed and 809,157 were used for voting, a decrease by a third compared to the 2011 elections.

VIII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Any voter over the age of 21 by election day is eligible to be elected, except those holding citizenship or residence permit of a foreign state. In addition, citizens convicted of grave or very grave crimes, as well as crimes and administrative offences of “extremist” nature, cannot stand for elections for a number of years after their conviction has been expunged. These restrictions are at odds with international standards and obligations.²⁸

The candidate registration process is overregulated. The law stipulates strict and numerous requirements for submission of nomination applications, including a plethora of documents such as education diploma, statement on criminal records, sources and amount of income, and financial statements on assets owned by candidates, their spouses and children, as well as bank accounts and properties abroad. In addition, a contestant cannot submit more than five per cent in excess of the required number of supporting signatures. The candidate registration process resulted in many candidates representing political parties, but hardly any independents were able to satisfy the cumbersome requirements for standing in SMCs.

²⁵ A noticeable exception was Orenburg *oblast* where almost all OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors questioned the integrity of the voter lists due to the existence of ‘dead souls’. The allegations, however, were not substantiated.

²⁶ For example, voters in Munich received a ballot for SMC 123 in Moscow *oblast*, and those in Belarus and San Francisco received a ballot for SMCs 160 and 161 in Samarskaya *oblast*, respectively.

²⁷ Shortly before the election day, the CEC adopted an instruction allowing for similar registration of students who moved to their university cities for the school year beginning on 1 September. While the instruction stated that efforts should be made to avoid double registration, it was silent on how it should be done.

²⁸ The 2012 changes to the Law on Basic Guarantees provided for blanket restrictions on voting rights of those convicted for grave or very grave crimes and life-time bans on candidacy rights. The Constitutional Court found the concerned provision unconstitutional to the extent that it stipulates restrictions which are indiscriminate and disproportional. The Law was amended, and those who committed grave crimes cannot stand candidates for 10, and those who have committed very grave crimes for 15 years from the time their conviction has expunged. Restrictions on voting rights of those with expunged criminal record are at odds with the principle of proportionality as provided by paragraph 24 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#): “any restriction on rights and freedoms must, in a democratic society, relate to one of the objectives of the applicable law and be strictly proportionate to the aim of that law.”

A total of 74 political parties registered with the Ministry of Justice had the right to participate in the State Duma elections. While 14 parties met the legal criteria for registering federal lists and candidates in SMCs without collecting support signatures, one of them registered only the federal list, and six registered only SMC candidates. Eventually 20 parties stood for elections, fielding some 8,500 candidates.²⁹ The candidate registration process resulted in a plurality of candidates representing political parties, but hardly any independent nominee was able to satisfy the cumbersome requirements for standing in SMCs.

Four parties attempted to register federal lists by collecting the legally required minimum of 200,000 signatures. Great Fatherland Party and Union of Labour each submitted signatures in excess of the required number, but were not accepted because the number of invalid signatures in the sample used for verification the legal threshold. *Volya* party submitted 40,687 signatures and *Rodnaya* party submitted no signatures at all. None of these parties filled complaints against their rejection.

Self-nominated candidates were required to collect support signatures of at least three per cent of the voters registered in a constituency, which according to international good practice is excessive.³⁰ Only 23 out of 304 nominees passed the registration requirements.

Some of the unsuccessful candidates stated to the OSCE/ODIHR EOM about insufficient time for collecting signatures. Several nominees submitted unsuccessful complaints to the CEC against their rejection. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM is aware of 15 self-nominees lodging appeals to the Supreme Court against the invalidation of the supporting signatures; all cases were rejected.

Consideration should be given to simplifying the candidate registration procedures, including by lowering the number of required supporting signatures for self-nominated candidates to comply with international good practice.

The accuracy of the required documentation, including the validity of supporting signatures, is verified with the assistance of other institutions, notably the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The validity of a selected sample of 20 per cent is verified; if 5 per cent of them are declared invalid, additional 15 per cent are checked. If the number of invalid signatures exceeds five per cent, a candidate or a party is not registered, which is contrary to international good practice.³¹

Each signature has to meet strict formal requirements. For example, a signature is invalidated if the date was not handwritten by the supporter next to his/her signature (or if it is written by somebody else), if the supporter's address does not include the *rayon* name (even if identical to the city name), or if the person collecting signatures does not handwrite his/her personal data and sign the form. In several cases entire sheets of signatures were invalidated because they were collected by PEC members, which the law prohibits. It is likely that these voters signed in good faith without knowing that the persons collecting signatures were PEC members.

The reasons for invalidating signatures should be reconsidered as they unduly limit the right of voters to support prospective candidates. It is recommendable to allow for the submission of a higher number of excess signatures and to verify as many signatures as necessary in order to determine whether the number of valid signatures meets the required threshold.

²⁹ In 2011, 7 parties with some 3,000 candidates contested the elections.

³⁰ Paragraph I.1.3(ii) of the [Code of Good Practice](#) states that “the law should not require collection of the signatures of more than 1 per cent of voters in the constituency concerned.”

³¹ Paragraph 1.2(iv) of the [Code of Good Practice](#) stipulates that “the checking process must in principle cover all signatures; however, once it has been established beyond doubt that the requisite number of signatures has been collected, the remaining signatures need not be checked”.

IX. CAMPAIGN

The official election campaign started from the day of nomination of candidates and ended one day before the election day. The campaign was overall low-key with ER generally being most visible and prevalent. The interest of the electorate in the campaign appeared limited. The campaign took place against a backdrop of an ongoing economic crisis.³² Activities intensified in its final days, particularly in the regions that concurrently held local elections.

Contestants campaigned through free media airtime and space, billboards and electronic advertisement boards, door-to-door canvassing, distribution of leaflets and other printed material, and small-scale meetings. No major rallies were organized. The campaign rhetoric focused on personalities and was polarized between the ER and other contestants. The Internet became an alternative to classic campaigning and some contestants focused their campaign exclusively on it. Social networking sites, blogs, and video sharing provided a significant communication platform for voters.

With some exceptions, the vast majority of parties repeatedly and openly expressed support for the president, and the ER portrayed itself as his party.³³ Patriotism was a notable feature of the campaign discourse. While the major topics of the campaign were the socio-economic situation, political stability and foreign policy, the main parties did not offer clear political alternatives. This, combined with the low-level of campaign visibility and an apparent public indifference in the elections, as indicated by a limited turnout at all 28 campaign events observed by OSCE/ODIHR EOM, limited the voters' choice.

The legislation regulating the campaign conduct is overly restrictive. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM noted unequal treatment of contestants by the local authorities and limitations of the freedom of assembly of some opposition parties in certain regions, which is contrary to international standards and obligations.³⁴ The notification procedure of campaign events was selectively applied by local authorities to effectively deny permission to contestants to hold rallies or to make it conditional, for example by requiring a change of venue to another one less favourable to the contestant.³⁵ As a result, opposition commonly used individual picketing, as it does not require prior notification to authorities.³⁶ In none of the cases observed by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM were such measures applied against ER, giving it an advantage over other contestants.

³² [According to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service](#), the real disposable income of the population from January to August 2016 decreased by 5.8 per cent in comparison to the same period in 2015.

³³ The Law on State Duma Elections provides that the use of images of individuals other than candidates is not allowed. ER used the image of the president on campaign materials, and its paid-for advertisement clips had the slogan "For the president's party, for ER". On 29 August, Yabloko filed a complaint against ER on this matter with the CEC which redirected it to the Moscow SEC. The SEC opened an administrative proceeding against the editor-in-chief of the newspaper which published the image of the president; he was fined by a court with RUB 1,000. At time of writing this report, 1 EUR was approximately 72 RUB.

³⁴ Paragraph 7.6 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) requires that the state provides 'political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law.' See also [General Comment No. 25](#) to the 1966 [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#). See also Article 67.3-4 of the Law on State Duma elections.

³⁵ The OSCE/ODIHR EOM was informed of campaign events repeatedly not permitted at requested locations by PARNAS in Krasnodar, St. Petersburg, Perm, Samara and Volgograd, KPRF in Krasnodar, Yabloko in Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Tomsk, SR in Barnaul and Party of Growth in Ulyanovsk.

³⁶ Individual picketing refers to a person distributing campaign materials on behalf of contestants.

A number of candidates informed the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that they refrained from filing complaints due to shortage of financial and time resources as well as lack of confidence in adequate legal remedy.

While the law obliges advertising companies to treat electoral contestants equally, some political parties reported problems in getting access to billboard space. Opposition contestants complained that local contractors either claimed that the space was reserved for the ruling party or they demanded disproportionately high payments, unaffordable to contestants.³⁷

Authorities should demonstrate full respect of fundamental freedoms and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens as foreseen by the legislation. A competitive political environment which could result in viable political alternatives is of crucial importance.

During the campaign, leaders and several members of PARNAS were physically attacked.³⁸ In St. Petersburg, on 24 August police detained four PARNAS activists, including one candidate, and confiscated campaign materials on the grounds that they were participating in a non-authorized event. Again in St. Petersburg, on 15 September two PARNAS candidates were detained for distributing party newspaper containing an opinion poll.³⁹ On 3 September in Tyumen, police disrupted an authorized Yabloko event, briefly detained three participants and confiscated campaign material due to participation of minors in that event. Destruction of campaign material was observed on several occasions.⁴⁰ Some contestants also complained about the dissemination of fake information, including distribution of leaflets and newspapers with wrong or libellous information discrediting them.⁴¹

In several regions, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM witnessed misuse of administrative resources for campaign purposes, which is contrary to international standards and obligations and national legislation.⁴² The CEC publicly highlighted the problem and sent a letter to governors requesting them to follow-up on any misuse of administrative resources.

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed and received allegations of attempts by local state structures to influence voters' choice in favour of the ruling party.⁴³ The start of the school year was also used for campaigning.⁴⁴

³⁷ Denial to display campaign material was reported by KPRF and Yabloko in Moscow; by PARNAS in Kazan, Ufa and Volgograd; by KPRF in Samara; and by SR in Krasnoyarsk.

³⁸ Unidentified individuals attacked PARNAS Chairperson Mikhail Kasyanov on 10 August in Stavropol, and deputy chairperson Vladimir Kara-Murza on 2 September in Nizhny Novgorod.

³⁹ By law, publishing opinion polls from five days prior to the elections is prohibited; the law does not regulate such distribution of opinion polls published prior to the five-day period.

⁴⁰ OSCE/ODIHR EOM observations in: St. Petersburg, Volgograd, Krasnoyarsk, Lipetsk, Barnaul, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Ufa, Samara, Perm, and Tyumen. Several complaints were lodged on this matter.

⁴¹ Such cases include, among others, alleged falsification of a website of PARNAS candidates in Barnaul and Novosibirsk, and a negative billboard campaign against the Yabloko candidate in Ufa, who filed a complaint. ER criticized opposition parties for slandering rhetoric, including reference to ER as a 'party of crooks and thieves.' Article 69.7 of the Law on State Duma Elections prohibits negative campaigning.

⁴² OSCE/ODIHR EOM observations in Chelyabinsk, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Perm, Samara, Saratov and Tatarstan. See paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#), article 3.6 of [CIS Convention](#), and the [OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources during Electoral Processes](#). See also Article 53 of the Law of State Duma Elections.

⁴³ In Moscow on 31 August, the OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed an ER campaigning held as a social event at a service center. In Penza, civil servants reported pressure exercised by the local administration to attend ER campaign events during working hours on 18, 19 and 24 August. Allegations of pressure on civil servants were reported in Barnaul, Kazan, Khabarovsk, Krasnoyarsk, Mari-El, Perm, Pskov, Samara, and Tomsk.

⁴⁴ OSCE/ODIHR EOM witnessed ER campaigning in schools in Moscow and Krasnodar. In Novosibirsk, children's school material with the ER logo on it was distributed.

The authorities, political parties and candidates should take further steps to safeguard against the misuse of administrative resources to ensure an equitable campaign environment.

X. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Citizens and legal entities, including political parties, can donate to electoral contestants. The spending limit is 700 million RUB for a party and 40 million RUB for a candidate, although these limits exclude expenditures made by party's regional branches from their electoral funds.⁴⁵

The 14 political parties that registered federal lists of candidates opened dedicated campaign accounts for all campaign-related incomes and expenses, as legally required. They had to submit two financial reports to the CEC: first when submitting the list of candidates, and the second not later than 30 days following the publication of results. The same principles applied for candidates in SMCs, where the SECs were responsible for oversight.

Throughout the campaign, the information of incomes and expenditures was regularly posted on the CEC website, but the level of detail varied as the law does not require a detailed reporting breakdown. This negatively impacted on the transparency of campaign finance.

The OSCE/ODIHR EOM analysed information regarding the financing of campaigns of parties and candidates in 32 subjects, and identified different practices. Some SECs published comprehensive data, while others issued only basic or no information. Not all contestants submitted the financial information to SECs, and the majority of submitted reports had incomplete data on both the nature and amount of the donations and expenses. The bulk of campaign expenses was designated as 'publication and distribution of printed materials', without further details.⁴⁶

Consideration could be given to increasing the transparency of campaign finance and accountability, including through requiring the reports to comprise detailed breakdown of incomes and expenses and preferably using standardized templates.

Almost all contestants complained of lack of funds, which some SMC candidates and smaller parties listed as the biggest impediment to their campaigns. Several OSCE/ODIHR EOM interlocutors alleged widespread use of undeclared funds by parties for political advertising prior to the registration of candidates, which was not subject to reporting.⁴⁷ A number of opposition parties alleged that the ER financed campaign events from outside its campaign account, citing examples of campaign materials not including imprint data as required by law or public events organized with public funds where the ER promoted their candidates.⁴⁸ The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed SR and LDPR also using campaign material without imprint data.

⁴⁵ The law provides for de-registration or annulment of election results of a contestant who surpasses the spending limit by at least five per cent.

⁴⁶ Article 7.3 of the [2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#) states that "Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures [...] to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties." [The 2011 OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) recommend that parties should disclose all categories of required information.

⁴⁷ These allegations were made in particular with respect to ER primaries held in spring 2016.

⁴⁸ The OSCE/ODIHR EOM obtained examples of such campaign material in Krasnoyarsk, Lipetsk, Moscow and St. Petersburg; formal complaints were lodged on this matter, e.g. in Khabarovsk, Pskov, Volgograd, Yekaterinburg and several Moscow SMCs.

XI. MEDIA

A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Despite the multifarious nature of the media scene comprising several thousand television and radio stations registered in the country, the diversity of views is limited. Television is the main source of information, including for elections. It is followed by on-line sources, social media in particular. OTR, nominally the public television, operates from 2013 and attracts little audience.⁴⁹ The broadcast media with the highest audience – Channel 1, Russia 1 and NTV – are controlled by the state or its affiliated enterprises,⁵⁰ and represent the position of the political establishment, *de facto* unchallenged in the absence of a critical media with national coverage.⁵¹ Similarly, the state regional media tend to act as mouthpiece of local governments.

Media outlets should be free in establishing their own editorial policies. Concrete steps should be taken to strengthen editorial and financial independence of the state and public media to facilitate citizens' access to pluralistic information.

The primary media legislation is complex and comprises a plethora of laws and statutory instruments. The Constitution provides for freedom of expression and the right to information, however, restrictive legislation and strict regulatory framework encourage self-censorship. Libel and insulting state officials are criminal offenses. Blanket anti-extremism legislation is applicable for media houses and journalists, including online blogs, while recent amendments to anti-extremism legislation further restrict the freedom of expression.⁵² The existing anti-extremism legislation is increasingly being applied for online content.⁵³

Consideration could be given to decriminalizing libel and insult of state officials as well as repealing legislation placing disproportionate limitations on free speech and expression, including on the Internet.

⁴⁹ OTR – Public TV is a non-commercial organization, founded and funded by the government; its director general is also the editor-in-chief and is appointed by the president. OTR is a ‘thematic’ digital channel; in 2015, the [viewership](#) of all thematic digital channels combined reached some 14 percent audience share, roughly the same as the audience of the single most popular TV Channel 1.

⁵⁰ Russia 1 is part of the Russian Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, financed from the state budget. Its director is appointed by the president. Channel 1 and NTV are open joint stock companies *de facto* controlled by the government or its affiliated enterprises. Paragraph 16 of [General Comment 34](#) to the [ICCPR](#) provides that “States parties should ensure that public broadcasting services operate in an independent manner [...] and should guarantee their independence and editorial freedom. They should provide funding in a manner that does not undermine their independence.”

⁵¹ Critical channels like TV *Dozhd* or TV-2 (Tomsk-based regional channel) are not available on cable networks since 2014 and are accessible only on Internet.

⁵² In July 2016 the new anti-extremism legislation package was enforced, comprising amendments to 14 laws. The package gives state authorities a wide range of tools to control the media but fails to clearly define what constitutes ‘separatism, extremism and incitement to violence.’ Recently, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) [criticized](#) the inclusion of journalists in a publicly available list of “terrorists and extremists”. The Criminal Code was also amended in July 2016, increasing severity of penalties for incitement to ‘hatred or hostility’ and ‘humiliation of human dignity’ of a person ‘affiliated to any social group’ if such actions are committed publicly or through media, including online. An RFoM [press statement](#) criticized the previous 2014 amendments to the Code which increased criminal liability for online calls for extremist activity to up to five years in prison. Paragraph 34 of [General Comment 34](#) to the [ICCPR](#) provides that “The principle of proportionality must also take account of the form of expression at issue as well as the means of its dissemination. For instance, the value placed by the Covenant upon uninhibited expression is particularly high in the circumstances of public debate in a democratic society concerning figures in the public and political domain”.

⁵³ [The Moscow-based SOVA Center for Information and Analysis 2015 report notes](#) 232 convictions for extremist speech, out of which 194 are related to online speeches.

The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (*RosKomNadzor*), a state body with a complex structure with 71 regional offices, regulates the media (including online) and has broad sanctioning powers, among others to impose fines, request removal of publications deemed inconsistent with the legislation, block websites without a prior court ruling, and initiate media's closure in case of two warnings in a calendar year. The Minister of Tele and Mass Communications appoints the head of *RosKomNadzor* and his/her deputies. The head of *RosKomNadzor* appoints the heads of the regional offices.⁵⁴

Consideration could be given to the establishment of an independent oversight body, mandated to oversee free, equal and fair access to state-controlled broadcasters.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

The campaign in the media began on 20 August. It is primarily governed by the Law on State Duma Elections and the Law on Basic Guarantees, which prescribe equal coverage of contestants and allotment of free airtime/space in state-funded media. The Law on State Duma Elections sets stringent limitations on media's editorial content: candidates can only feature in person or surrounded by 'unidentifiable persons'; landmark buildings or widely-known personalities cannot appear in campaign materials; dissemination of information which could facilitate a negative attitude to a political party is also prohibited.

The 1994 Law on Coverage of Activities of State Institutions in State-funded Media remains in force during the election campaign and could provide the incumbents with an additional coverage as it demands mandatory reporting on national and regional executive and legislative bodies within the editorial programmes.

Consideration could be given to liberalizing the contestants' campaign in the media, requiring equitable rather than equal media coverage, and reassessing the relevance of the legal obligations for state media to cover the activities of state officials.

Contesting parties were entitled to free airtime on state media (SMC candidates on the regional media), in the format of pre-recorded spots and round table programmes or discussions. The law defines the minimum free airtime/space for campaigns.⁵⁵ Privately owned media had to adhere to the principle of equality of opportunity in their programmes.⁵⁶ Contestants were also allowed to use paid advertisement on broadcast and print media.

The CEC oversees the conduct of the election campaign including media's compliance with campaign regulations on the federal level, while lower-level commissions supervise the adherence to the campaign rules in their respective areas. The CEC established a working group for media-related issues that comprised 40 representatives from various state-funded and some commercial

⁵⁴ The [General Comment 34](#) to the [ICCPR](#) provides that "It is recommended that States should establish an independent and public broadcasting licensing authority, with the power to examine broadcasting applications and to grant licenses."

⁵⁵ For instance, each state national TV or radio channel had to allocate not less than one hour of airtime in a working day, and regional broadcasters half an hour for campaign of contestants.

⁵⁶ The Law on State Duma Elections, requires that information carried by the mass media or disseminated by other methods shall be objective and accurate and shall not violate the equality of political parties with federal lists of candidates or candidates in SMCs and that media news programmes and publications shall not discriminate against or give preference to any political party, in particular with regard to the time devoted to their election activities, or the amount of space allocated in the print media.

media outlets. The working group held only one session, when it reviewed and dismissed in a transparent manner a complaint regarding a video spot.

C. MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS⁵⁷



The state media complied with their obligation to provide contestants with free airtime/space to present their platforms, and contestants were generally interested in using this campaign mean. Some parties not represented in the State Duma complained to the OSCE/ODIHR EOM that the free airtime allocated was not sufficient, arguing lack of access to media outside of the free airtime programmes and outside of the campaign period.

In general, the format of the free airtime programmes did not facilitate exchange of opinions between candidates, although the programmes in some national state channels at times allowed for interactions among contestants.⁵⁸ Contrary to the law, in many regional media these programmes were aired outside of prime time, not widely accessible to voters.

The free campaign spots were aired in the same blocks with paid spots, so they could not be distinguished and voters were not aware of their nature. The paid airtime/space was generally utilized in key media by the main political forces, in particular by ER. Some national commercial broadcasters decided to limit the election coverage to the news segments and to not accept any political advertisement, due to commercial reasons and convoluted legal requirements.

Consideration could be given to obliging media to identify the party-sponsored airtime/space in the media in a clear manner to allow voters to be aware of the paid nature of the programme.

The results of OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring of the editorial coverage demonstrated that the state and private national channels gave limited coverage to contestants, while the president and/or government officials received the vast majority of the coverage, mostly positive in tone. Starting from 20 August, the president and the government together received over 90 per cent of editorial coverage on the national private TV channels NTV and RBK, 83 per cent on Channel 5, and 70 and 63 per cent of such coverage, respectively, on Channel 1 and Russia 1. These media failed to provide equitable coverage to contestants: ER received the largest share on each of the five monitored national television channels; in all but Russia 1, ER received more news and current affairs coverage than all other parties combined.⁵⁹

The state radio *Vesti* FM demonstrated similar approach. The president and the government combined received over 78 per cent of editorial coverage. The ER received more than 17 per cent, more than all other contesting parties together, mainly positive in tone. In contrast, the private *Echo Moskvy* employed a somewhat critical approach towards authorities, and allocated 48 per cent of coverage to the president and the government combined. Yabloko received 31 per cent, ER 8 per cent, LDPR 6 per cent, and PARNAS 5 per cent of editorial coverage.

⁵⁷ The OSCE/ODIHR EOM media monitoring started on 12 August for eight TV stations (Channel 1, Channel 5, NTV, Russia 1, RBK, TNV Kazan, Life 78 St. Petersburg and OTC Novosibirsk); two radio stations: (*Echo Moskvy* and *Vesti* FM); and four dailies (*Kommersant*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, *Rosijskaya Gazeta* and RBK). The media monitoring results included in this report relate to the campaign period from 20 August to 16 September.

⁵⁸ Among media monitored by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, only Channel 1 and Russia 1, both state-controlled national TV channels, aired free airtime programmes that included discussions.

⁵⁹ In Russia 1 editorial programmes, ER received 9 per cent of coverage, KPRF 8.3 per cent and LDPR 6.7 per cent; other political parties got less than 3 per cent of total coverage.

Regional TV channels predominantly focused on the activities of the regional governments. OTC (Novosibirsk) gave almost 95 per cent of its editorial coverage to the government, and ER received the remaining 5 per cent. Life 78 (St. Petersburg) gave 70 per cent of such coverage to the government, 13 per cent to the Party of Growth, and 5 per cent to ER and KPRF each. TNV (Kazan) allocated 54 per cent to the government, while ER received over 20 per cent. In several regions, the coverage by public media of local and regional officials who were ER candidates often did not distinguish between their functions and campaigns.⁶⁰

The monitored newspapers *Kommersant*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, *Rosijskaya Gazeta* and RBK all concentrated their coverage on the president, the government and ER. These subjects received a combined coverage ranging from 81 per cent in RBK to 97 per cent in *Rosijskaya Gazeta*. The tone of the coverage was predominantly neutral.

The CEC could consider conducting its own media monitoring during election campaigns in order to identify inequitable and biased coverage of the campaign and to take effective action against those violating the law.

The combined coverage of female contestants in the discussion programmes on Channel 1 and Russia 1 was around 6 per cent only. The combined coverage of female contestant in the editorial programmes of monitored TV channels was higher, around 20 per cent, and in the monitored radio stations it was around 27 per cent. The TV channels allocated to female political actors some 10 per cent, and radio stations some 17 per cent of their editorial programmes related to political actors (including contestants).

XII. ELECTION OBSERVERS

Party and candidate representatives, media and international observers can follow the electoral process. Contrary to international standards and commitments, the legislation does not provide for citizen observation.⁶¹ Representatives of citizen observer groups, such as *Golos*, Citizen Observer, SONAR and others registered as media and/or party observers to monitor the elections. *Golos* had to operate under conditions un conducive to the principle of participation of civil society in public affairs, especially after it was dissolved as an organization.⁶²

⁶⁰ OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed this in Barnaul, Kazan, Saratov, Moscow, Novosibirsk and Volgograd.

⁶¹ Paragraph 8 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) provides that participating States “consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place.” Paragraph 20 of the [General Comment No. 25](#) to the [ICCPR](#) requires that “There should be independent scrutiny of the voting and counting process [...]” Article 14.1 of the 2002 [CIS Convention](#) provides for election observation by “public formation (public organisation).” Section II.3.2.a of the [Code of Good Practice](#) states that “Both national and international observers should be given the widest possible opportunity to participate in an election observation exercise.” In response to petition brought by a group of State Duma deputies, the Constitutional Court decided that law provides for other channels through which the voters/citizens can follow the voting and tabulation process.

⁶² On 27 July 2016, the Presnensky Court in Moscow dissolved the non-profit association *Golos* on charges presented by the Ministry of Justice which included failure to change its charter in accordance with the new requirements of the civil law, as well as the association’s involvement in ‘political activity’ contrary to the requirements of ‘foreign agent legislation’. *Golos* continues to function as a movement. Article 25 (a) of the [ICCPR](#) states “Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) to take part in the conduct of public affairs [...]” Article 13 of the [2003 UNCAC](#) states “Each State Party shall take appropriate measures, within its means and in accordance with fundamental principles of its domestic law, to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations [...]”

In line with international standards and commitments, the legislation should guarantee non-partisan citizen observers the opportunity to independently scrutinize the electoral process.

There are disproportional restrictions for partisan observers and media representatives. The contestants had to submit to the respective TEC the list of their observers at least three days before election day, and an observer could be present only in a particular polling station specified in that list. The April 2016 legal amendments require that media representatives could be accredited only if employed by the media outlet for at least two months before the official announcement of elections on 17 June. Positively, the law was amended to provide that observers cannot be expelled from a polling station without a court decision.

The legislation should be amended to provide for the observation of the entire electoral process by all observers. Observers should enjoy unimpeded access to all levels of election administration at all times.

XIII. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Election-related complaints can be lodged with electoral commissions, as well as with courts; if a complaint is lodged with both, the respective commission suspends the review of the complaint pending the resolution by the court. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM received no reports of any nuisances caused by this concurrent jurisdiction.

The CEC, as most of the lower-level commissions, established working groups composed of commission members, staff and experts to review complaints before the commission sessions. The complainants were invited to the sessions of the CEC, as well as of its working group, in line with legal requirements. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observed that lower-level commissions adopted the advisory opinions of the working groups often without debate.

Prior to the election day, the CEC received 1,896 ‘applications’ concerning alleged violations of the electoral legislation.⁶³ Before the election day, the CEC reviewed only 44 complaints in its sessions, in a transparent and collegial manner and in observance of due process guarantees. All other complaints were considered by individual commission members, in a process lacking transparency.⁶⁴

The CEC should consider posting on its website information on applications and complaints, as well as the relevant decisions and responses, in a timely manner.

The CEC received 181 ‘applications’ on election day and 331 by the time the election results were announced on 22 September. On 21 and 22 September, the CEC made four decisions concerning election day violations. In response to reports on alleged systemic violations and respective requests for revoking the results of elections in St. Petersburg and Chelyabinsk, the CEC ruled that the decisions of lower-level commissions establishing the results of elections can be revoked only by a court.⁶⁵

⁶³ In addition to complaints, applications may include general reports on violations, requests for clarifications, as well as suggestions for improvements of the electoral process.

⁶⁴ Unlike the decisions taken in CEC sessions, those made by individual members were not posted online.

⁶⁵ The CEC forwarded the reports on violations to the St. Petersburg and Voronezh *oblast* SEC and the Prosecutor’s Office for further investigation, and created a working group to investigate the reports on violations in Chelyabinsk.

In response to requests from Yabloko and KPRF to invalidate the results of State Duma elections and to order a country-wide recount respectively, the CEC ruled that election results can be invalidated and such a recount can be ordered only if trustworthy facts were established by courts about wide-spread violations, which the CEC decided was not the case.

As of 22 September, 10 CEC decisions were appealed to the Supreme Court, which upheld the CEC decisions in all cases. In total, the Supreme Court reviewed over 70 appeals concerning State Duma elections, and the vast majority were rejected.

Lower level commissions and district courts received a number of complaints, mostly concerning candidate registration, campaign activities and media-related disputes. In most of the cases observed by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM prior to the election day, the review of complaints met the required procedures and established deadlines. However, on election day several commissions handled complaints informally or left them unresolved. A number of candidates and parties did not pursue appellate procedures explaining this by the lack of trust in the integrity of electoral dispute resolution in the regions.

To enhance trust in the electoral dispute resolution process the authorities should thoroughly investigate all cases of election violations, and perpetrators, including election commission members who participate in or tolerate such malpractices, should be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

XIV. ELECTION DAY

Election day generally proceeded in an orderly manner, but numerous procedural irregularities were noted during the counting process. Voting was generally assessed positively by the IEOM observers, despite significant problems with the secrecy of the vote. The transparency of the process was negatively affected by PECs and TECs at times not providing observers the possibility for meaningful observation, especially during counting and tabulation. Contrary to the law, PEC results protocols were not posted for public scrutiny in about a third of the counts observed.

Throughout the election day, the CEC reacted to publicly reported irregularities, including videos indicating cases of ballot box stuffing and carousel voting that were published online. The commission requested the relevant SECs to follow up on such allegations together with the law enforcement agencies.

As required by law, preliminary results by polling station were published online, which contributed to the transparency of the process. A total of 2,442 observation forms were received from IEOM observers: 165 forms on opening, 1,953 forms on voting, 169 forms on the vote count, and 165 forms on tabulation at TECs. The CEC announced voter turnout at 48 per cent.

Opening and Voting

Most polling stations observed opened on time. The opening process was assessed as good or very good in all but five observations. Some procedural problems were noted – PECs did not announce the numbers of voters registered, of ballots received and of voters who requested mobile voting in 24 per cent of observations, and PECs did not cancel the unused AVCs in 10 per cent. Unauthorized persons were present in 16 per cent of the polling stations observed during opening, and in 7 cases they were interfering with or directing the work of PECs.

The voting process was assessed as good or very good in 96 per cent of observations. However, despite the overall positive assessment, several procedural and other serious problems were noted. In 4 per cent of polling stations observed, the ballot boxes were not properly sealed. Secrecy of the vote was problematic in nearly half of the polling stations observed, with voters not always folding their ballots (70 per cent) or not always marking their ballot in secrecy (19 per cent).⁶⁶ Instances of group voting were noted (12 per cent).

The practical aspects of the organization of voting should be reviewed to ensure the secrecy of the vote, as provided by OSCE commitments and the law. The significance of ballot secrecy should be emphasized during training of election commissions and in voter education materials.

Overcrowding was noted in 6 per cent, and the layout of 5 per cent of polling stations observers was assessed as inadequate. Some instances of tension, unrest or intimidation of voters were also noted by IEOM observers in 1 per cent of observations. Some 55 per cent of the polling stations observed were not accessible to voters with disabilities.⁶⁷

To further promote universal suffrage, authorities should take necessary measures to facilitate unrestricted access of voters with reduced mobility to polling stations.

Cases of serious irregularities were noted during voting, such as voters pressured whom to vote for and unauthorized persons directing the work of PECs (2 per cent of observations each), and same person assisting different voters (1 per cent). A number of observers were not allowed to scrutinize the voter lists; when they were allowed to do so, they noted instances of series of seemingly identical signatures on the voter lists (1 per cent of observations). Group voting was noted in 9 per cent, as well as 7 cases of multiple voting.

IEOM observers noted three instances of ballot box stuffing and two of carousel voting. Moreover, measures against possible multiple voting were not always respected: voters not residing within the precinct were allowed to vote without AVCs (2 per cent) and proxy voting was observed (1 per cent).⁶⁸

Counting

The counting process was markedly worse than voting. It was assessed by the IEOM observers as bad or very bad in 27 per cent of the polling stations observed, which is a substantial figure. The problems reported during the counting were mostly due to failure of the commissions to adhere to the established procedures. Counting procedures were not followed in many PECs observed: the commission members did not cancel the unused ballots prior to counting (6 per cent); did not cross-check control equations in the results protocols prior to opening the ballot boxes or at all (40 and 21 per cent, respectively); did not mix the ballots from mobile and stationary ballot boxes prior to counting (39 per cent); did not determine the validity of ballots in a consistent or reasonable manner (13 and 11 per cent, respectively); and did not cancel invalid ballots before counting valid votes (50 per cent).

⁶⁶ Paragraph 20 of the [General Comment No. 25](#) to the [ICCPR](#) requires that: “States should take measures to guarantee the requirement of the secrecy of the vote during elections, including absentee voting, where such a system exists.”

⁶⁷ Article 29.a(i) of the 2006 [CRPD](#) requires states to ensure “that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use.”

⁶⁸ Paragraph 21 of the [General Comment No. 25](#) to the [ICCPR](#) requires that: “The principle of one person, one vote must apply.”

Importantly, PECs did not determine the number of voters based on signatures on the voter list (in 9 per cent of the observations), pre-signed the results protocols (in 6 per cent) and completed the protocols with pencil (14 per cent). Unauthorized persons were present during the counting (23 per cent), and interfering with or directing the work of PECs (8 per cent). Indications of ballot box stuffing were observed in 2 PECs during counting.

Transparency was affected by PECs not announcing or showing to those present the choice on every ballot (43 per cent) or counting the ballots in a manner that not all those present could see the voter's mark (48 per cent); PEC members conducted simultaneous counting (36 per cent) and observers or PEC members were not allowed to examine ballots upon request (23 per cent); the enlarged protocols were not displayed publicly (39 per cent) or figures in the enlarged protocols were not entered during the counting process (47 per cent); and observers did not have a clear view of counting procedures (10 per cent).

The legal safeguards against possible fraud need to be strictly adhered to by the PECs. The counting procedures and completion of results protocols should be conducted transparently, as foreseen by the law and in a manner conducive to a meaningful observation of the process. Training efforts for PEC members should be intensified, with a particular focus on voting and counting procedures.

Tabulation

The tabulation process was assessed negatively in 14 per cent of observations. The negative assessment was linked to procedural violations and a lack of transparency. The main problems noted were overcrowding (8 per cent) and transparency of the process (assessed negatively in 15 per cent), while premises and conditions were inadequate in 12 per cent of the observed TECs. The IEOM observers were denied access to tabulation data entry room in 31 per cent of the cases. Further, unauthorized people were present in 16 per cent of the observation, and in 4 per cent were interfering with or directing the process. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM observers reported that all TECs observed finished tabulation by the legal deadline of 20 September.

Announcement of results

The CEC started announcing preliminary results on 19 September and approved the final results on 22 September, within the legal deadline. In response to received evidence of election fraud, including video recordings, the CEC cancelled the results in nine polling stations.⁶⁹

Reports on questionable results in many polling stations in Saratov *oblast* featured in media and were conveyed to OSCE/ODIHR EOM observers.⁷⁰ The final results there show that in over 100 polling stations the results of the four parliamentary parties were the same, with a difference of only 0.1 – 0.2 per cent.⁷¹ No legal action was taken on this matter.

The CEC announced the final election results without further adjudication of complaints, stating that all the reported irregularities would be reviewed after the elections in order to ensure future improvements. This affected transparency and integrity of this important stage of the electoral

⁶⁹ These polling stations were in Adygeya, Dagestan and Mordovia Republics, Belgorodskaya, Nizhegorodskaya and Rostov *oblasts* and St. Petersburg city

⁷⁰ Prior to election day, representatives of some political parties reported to the OSCE/ODIHR EOM interference from local administration in the electoral process, stating that the deputy governor and the head of local administration in Saratov *oblast* decide on all election matters, including the voting results.

⁷¹ See the voting results by polling stations on [the CEC website](#).

process. The KPRF representative at the CEC signed the protocol of results, but attached to it a dissenting opinion concluding that the elections were not fair because of the reported irregularities.

The results show that the same four political parties of outgoing parliament are represented in the 7th State Duma, along with one SMC candidate from Rodina and Civic Platform each, and one independent candidate. The ruling ER, with 343 members, achieved its best result and gained a constitutional majority. The KPRF won 42, LDPR 39 and SR 23 seats.

The president and ER leadership declared that the electoral process was conducted successfully. Yabloko and PARNAS described the process as fraudulent and not reflecting the will of the people. Yabloko stated it does not recognize the results as legitimate due to “manipulation of voter turnout, organized coerced voting on a massive scale, and outright falsification during the tabulation of votes and completion of the protocols.” PARNAS stated that the electoral process was conducted “under the full control of the presidential administration and security services” and organized efforts were undertaken by authorities to discredit the party. A number of other contestants filed complaints with the CEC or SECs regarding the conduct of the process on election day, however, they did not publicly question the veracity of the results.

Candidates from national minorities, including Tatars, Bashkirs, Chechens and Avars were elected. Women remain largely under-represented, with 11 per cent women deputies in the outgoing Duma and 14 per cent in the newly elected one. There are no specific temporary special legislative measures, such as candidate quotas, to promote women’s participation and none of the main parties has internal policies to promote women on their candidate lists.⁷²

Political parties could be encouraged to promote gender equality and take resolute actions to put forward gender-balanced candidate lists, to increase visibility of female candidates during election campaigns and to integrate gender issues into their platforms.

XV. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered with a view to enhance the conduct of elections in the Russian Federation and to support efforts to bring them fully in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with past OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, in particular from the 2011 and 2012 Final Reports, which remain to be addressed. The OSCE/ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.⁷³

⁷² In paragraph 40.4 of the [1991 OSCE Moscow Document](#), participating States affirmed that it is their “goal to achieve not only *de jure* but *de facto* equality of opportunity between men and women and to promote effective measures to that end.” OSCE Ministerial Council decision 7/09 calls on the participating States to possible legislative measures, which would facilitate a more balanced participation of women and men in political and public life. Article 4 of the [1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) states that the adoption “of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination.”

⁷³ According to the paragraph 24 of the [1999 OSCE Istanbul Document](#), OSCE participating States committed themselves “to follow up promptly the ODIHR’s election assessment and recommendations.”

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consideration should be given to simplifying the legal framework for the elections, especially with respect to the complex and restrictive procedures for candidate registration, campaigning, and media coverage.
2. Authorities should align legislation concerning the freedoms of association, assembly and expression with international standards. The authorities should not interpret the law to limit the basic rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution and international standards.
3. Authorities should demonstrate full respect of fundamental freedoms and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens as foreseen by the legislation. A competitive political environment which could result in viable political alternatives is of crucial importance.
4. Media outlets should be free in establishing their own editorial policies. Concrete steps should be taken to strengthen editorial and financial independence of the state and public media to facilitate citizens' access to pluralistic information.
5. Consideration could be given to decriminalizing libel and insult of state officials as well as repealing legislation placing disproportionate limitations on free speech and expression, including on the Internet.
6. In line with international standards and commitments, the legislation should guarantee non-partisan citizen observers the opportunity to independently scrutinize the electoral process.
7. To enhance trust in the electoral dispute resolution process the authorities should thoroughly investigate all cases of election violations, and perpetrators, including election commission members who participate in or tolerate such malpractices, should be prosecuted in accordance with the law.
8. Political parties could be encouraged to promote gender equality and take resolute actions to put forward gender-balanced candidate lists, to increase visibility of female candidates during election campaigns and to integrate gender issues into their platforms.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Framework

9. Restrictions on voter and candidate rights should be reviewed to ensure their proportionality. Restrictions on candidate rights for people with dual citizenship, residency permit in another state, or expunged criminal record should be removed. Restrictions on electoral blocs could be lifted. In line with international obligations, restrictions on the suffrage rights of persons with mental disabilities should be removed, whilst necessary support mechanisms to exercise the right to vote should be provided.

Election Administration

10. In order to increase the integrity and public confidence in the electoral process, the election administration should be guided by the law and principles of transparency, impartiality and independence foreseen in the law. Additional and effective safeguards should be considered to ensure full impartiality and independence of election commissions from state and local

government authorities and to prevent misuse of administrative resources for partisan ends, as required by the law.

Candidate Registration

11. Consideration should be given to simplifying the candidate registration procedures, including by lowering the number of required supporting signatures for self-nominated candidates to comply with international good practice.
12. The reasons for invalidating signatures should be reconsidered as they unduly limit the right of voters to support prospective candidates. It is recommendable to allow for the submission of a higher number of excess signatures and to verify as many signatures as necessary in order to determine whether the number of valid signatures meets the required threshold.

Campaign

13. The authorities, political parties and candidates should take further steps to safeguard against the misuse of administrative resources to ensure an equitable campaign environment.

Campaign Finance

14. Consideration could be given to increasing the transparency of campaign finance and accountability, including through requiring the reports to comprise detailed breakdown of incomes and expenses and preferably using standardized templates.

Media

15. Consideration could be given to the establishment of an independent oversight body, mandated to oversee free, equal and fair access to state-controlled broadcasters.
16. Consideration could be given to liberalizing the contestants' campaign in the media, requiring equitable rather than equal media coverage, and reassessing the relevance of the legal obligations for state media to cover the activities of state officials.
17. Consideration could be given to obliging media to identify the party-sponsored airtime/space in the media in a clear manner to allow voters to be aware of the paid nature of the programme.
18. The CEC could consider conducting its own media monitoring during election campaigns in order to identify inequitable and biased coverage of the campaign and to take effective action against those violating the law.

Election Observers

19. The legislation should be amended to provide for the observation of the entire electoral process by all observers. Observers should enjoy unimpeded access to all levels of election administration at all times.

Complaints and Appeals

20. The CEC should consider posting on its website information on applications and complaints, as well as the relevant decisions and responses, in a timely manner.

Election Day

21. The practical aspects of the organization of voting should be reviewed to ensure the secrecy of the vote, as provided by OSCE commitments and the law. The significance of ballot secrecy should be emphasized during training of election commissions and in voter education materials.
22. To further promote universal suffrage, authorities should take necessary measures to facilitate unrestricted access of voters with reduced mobility to polling stations.
23. The legal safeguards against possible fraud need to be strictly adhered to by the PECs. The counting procedures and completion of results protocols should be conducted transparently, as foreseen by the law and in a manner conducive to a meaningful observation of the process. Training efforts for PEC members should be intensified, with a particular focus on voting and counting procedures.

ANNEX I: FINAL RESULTS

1	Number of voters included in the voter list at the end of voting	110,061,200
2	Number of ballots received by precinct election commission	101,244,492
3	Number of ballots issued to voters who voted early	109,868
4	Number of ballots issued to voters at the polling station on voting day	49,174,491
5	Number of ballots issued to voters who voted outside of the polling station on voting day	3,416,633
6	Number of unused (cancelled) ballots	48,542,374
7	Number of ballots in mobile ballot boxes	3,524,522
8	Number of ballots in stationary ballot boxes	49,107,327
9	Number of invalid ballots	982,596
10	Number of valid ballots	51,649,253
11	Number of absentee voting certificates received by precinct election commission	1,936,683
12	Number of absentee voting certificates issued by precinct election commission to voters before voting day	1,030,295
13	Number of voters who voted with absentee voting certificates at polling stations	809,157
14	Number of cancelled absentee voting certificates	906,385
15	Number of absentee voting certificates issued to voters by territorial election commissions	216,029
16	Number of missing absentee voting certificates	3
17	Number of missing ballots	1,423
18	Number of ballots not registered during handover	297

		Number of votes cast for each federal list of candidates	
	Names of political parties, registered federal lists of candidates	absolute value	percentage of voters who participated in voting
1	Political Party "RODINA"	792,226	1.51
2	Political Party "COMMUNIST PARTY COMMUNISTS OF RUSSIA"	1,192,595	2.27
3	Political party "Russian Party of Pensioners for Justice"	910,848	1.73
4	Political Party "UNITED RUSSIA"	28,527,828	54.20
5	Political Party "Russian Ecological Party The Greens"	399,429	0.76
6	Political Party "Civic Platform"	115,433	0.22
7	Political Party LDPR - Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	6,917,063	13.14

8	Political Party "People's Freedom Party" (PARNAS)	384,675	0.73
9	Political Party "PARTY OF GROWTH"	679,030	1.29
10	Political Party "Civilian Power"	73,971	0.14
11	Political Party "Russian United Democratic Party "YABLOKO"	1,051,335	1.99
12	Political Party "COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION"	7,019,752	13.34
13	Political Party "PATRIOTS OF RUSSIA"	310,015	0.59
14	Political Party A JUST RUSSIA	3,275,053	6.22

The CEC data on the number of absentee voter certificates

1	Number of absentee voting certificates received by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation	2,931,700
2	Number of absentee voting certificates transferred to the subordinate election commissions	2,489,730
3	Number of unused absentee voting certificates cancelled by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation	441,970
4	Number of absentee voting certificates lost in the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation	0

The names of political parties that qualified for the distribution of deputy mandates and the number of seats due to each of these lists

	Political Party	Allocated Seats
1	Political Party "UNITED RUSSIA"	343
2	Political party "COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION"	42
3	Political Party LDPR - Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	39
4	Political Party A JUST RUSSIA	23
5	Political Party "Civic Platform"	1
6	Political Party "RODINA"	1
7	Self-nominated candidate	1

Source: CEC [website](#).

ANNEX II: LIST OF OBSERVERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Ilkka Armas Mikael	Kanerva	Finland	Special Co-ordinator
Marietta	Tidei	Italy	Head of Delegation
Mesila	Doda	Albania	
Albana	Vokshi	Albania	
Georg	Vetter	Austria	
Judith	Schwentner	Austria	
Roman	Haider	Austria	
Hannes	Weninger	Austria	
Rita Germaine A.	Bellens	Belgium	
Philip Michel F.	Dewinter	Belgium	
Patrick Christophe	Prevot	Belgium	
Mihael	Zmajlovic	Croatia	
Zuzka	Bebarova-Rujbrova	Czech Republic	
Ivana	Dobesova	Czech Republic	
Petr	Bratsky	Czech Republic	
Jan	Hornik	Czech Republic	
Peter Juel	Jensen	Denmark	
Thierry	Mariani	France	
Michel	Voisin	France	
Jean-Paul	Dupre	France	
Egon	Juttner	Germany	
Georgios	Varemenos	Greece	
Maria	Thelerity	Greece	
Anastasia	Gkara	Greece	
Tibor	Bana	Hungary	
Emma	Fattorini	Italy	
Ferdinando	Aiello	Italy	
Luigi	Compagna	Italy	
Sergio	Divina	Italy	
Guglielmo	Picchi	Italy	
Claudio	Fava	Italy	
Lyudmila	Poltorabatko	Kazakhstan	
Helen	Konzett-Bargetze	Liechtenstein	
Michiel	Servaes	Netherlands	
Torstein Tvedt	Solberg	Norway	
Kari	Henriksen	Norway	
Jan Zbigniev	Lopata	Poland	
Slawomir	Nitras	Poland	
Grzegorz	Furgo	Poland	
Elzbieta Joanna	Borowska	Poland	
Bozena	Szydłowska	Poland	
Barbara Halina	Bartus	Poland	

Jose	Medeiros	Portugal	
Paulo Miguel	Santos	Portugal	
Luis	Ferreira	Portugal	
Petru	Movila	Romania	
Doina	Silistru	Romania	
Vesna	Vervega	Slovenia	
Jose Ignacio	Sanchez Amor	Spain	
Jose Maria	Chiquillo Barber	Spain	
Anna Margaretha	Wallen	Sweden	
Goran Sven Erik	Pettersson	Sweden	
Jasenko	Omanovic	Sweden	
Annika	Eclund	Sweden	
Arhe	Hamednaca	Sweden	
Kerstin	Nilsson	Sweden	
Magnus	Oscarsson	Sweden	
Kent	Harstedt	Sweden	
Margareta Elisabeth	Cederfelt	Sweden	
Margareta	Kiener-Nellen	Switzerland	
Haydar	Akar	Turkey	
İsmail Emrah	Karayel	Turkey	
Royston Matthew	Smith	United Kingdom	
Jennifer	Hilton	United Kingdom	
Milovan	Petkovic	Croatia	Staff
Silvia	Demir	Czech Republic	Staff
Anne-Cecile	Blauwblomme-Delcroix	France	Staff
Georgios	Champouris	Greece	Staff
Giuseppe	Trezza	Italy	Staff
Anetta Janna	Kosieradzka	Poland	Staff
Irina	Alecu	Romania	Staff
Anca-Maria	Constantin	Romania	Staff
Saren	Akseli	Turkey	Staff
Andreas	Baker	Denmark	Secretariat
Anna	Di Domenico	Germany	Secretariat
Roberto	Montella	Italy	Secretariat
Francesco	Pagani	Italy	Secretariat
Gustavo	Pallares	Spain	Secretariat
Iryna	Sabashuk	Ukraine	Secretariat

OSCE/ODIHR EOM Short-term Observers

Grigor	BADIRYAN	Armenia
Victor	BIYAGOV	Armenia
Karen	GASPARYAN	Armenia
Tatevik	GEVORGIAN	Armenia
Lusine	HAKOBYAN	Armenia

Artak	HOVHANNISYAN	Armenia
Lusine	HOVHANNISYAN	Armenia
Tamara	HOVNANYAN	Armenia
Ruben	SAFRASTIAN	Armenia
Hakob	SARGSYAN	Armenia
Hayk	SARGSYAN	Armenia
Sona	YEGHIAZARYAN	Armenia
Marlen	DIALER-GRILLMAYER	Austria
Philipp	HERMANN	Austria
Martin	KRAEMER	Austria
Rudolf Wilhelm	ROTTER	Austria
Victor	NOVIKOV	Belarus
Aleksei	VASILKOV	Belarus
Denis	ZDOROV	Belarus
Geert Wilfried M	DAEMS	Belgium
Wim Jules	DEWAELE	Belgium
Celine Genevieve	MEIRLAEN	Belgium
Julia Sergeevna	TVERDOCHLEBOVA	Belgium
Adnan Daniel	AHMAD	Canada
Patricia	ATKINSON	Canada
Kristen Marie	BLAKE	Canada
Brice-Doctrovec	BOUZINGOU	Canada
Brygida	CROSS	Canada
Deborah Bingay	DUNTON	Canada
Sara Reva	GREENBLATT	Canada
William Dale	KELLY	Canada
Danylo	KORBABICZ	Canada
Jane	KOVARIK	Canada
Dawran	MUKAMIL SAFI	Canada
Janet Korkor	NORTEY	Canada
Benjamin	PARSONS	Canada
Barbara Rose	PUSZKAR	Canada
Fatima G	REMTULLA	Canada
Dominic	ROSZAK	Canada
Lori Jean	SHORTREED	Canada
Christopher Robert	SPENCE	Canada
Judith Juliane	SZABO	Canada
Shipra	VERMA	Canada
Richard Malcolm	WILLIAMS	Canada
Ivana	HOUSKOVA	Czech Republic
Vladimir	KADLEC	Czech Republic
Michal	KOUKAL	Czech Republic
Marianka	MACKOVA	Czech Republic
Alena	OBRUSNIKOVA	Czech Republic
Pavel	PROHAZKA	Czech Republic

Tomáš	TRAMPOTA	Czech Republic
Ib Willy	ALKEN	Denmark
Christian Wolter	ANDERSEN	Denmark
Hanne Susse		
Bøtefyhr	BERGMANN	Denmark
Grethe	BILLE	Denmark
Ewa Apolonia	CHYLINSKI	Denmark
Bo Gullack	FLINDT	Denmark
Jette Ryde	GOTTLIEB	Denmark
Kirsten Pia		
Borkfelt	MOGENSEN	Denmark
Flemming Björk	PEDERSEN	Denmark
Mashu Dimma	POULSEN	Denmark
Peter	PREHN-OLESEN	Denmark
Preben	RASMUSSEN	Denmark
Mette	SELCHAU	Denmark
Michael	STERNBERG	Denmark
Claus Flarup	WINTOP	Denmark
Oliver	JAKOBSON	Estonia
Tuuli	PÄRNSALU	Estonia
Siret	SCHAER	Estonia
Maija	TASA	Estonia
Birgit Irene	AUTERE	Finland
Maija Annikki	DAHLGREN	Finland
Harri Pertti Olavi	ERONEN	Finland
Kari Juhani	KAUNISMAA	Finland
Sonja Helena	KURTEN-VARTIO	Finland
Katarine	LINDSTEDT	Finland
Leena Johanna	LIUKKONEN-FORSELL	Finland
Juho Lauri	ROMPPAINEN	Finland
Pia Johanna	SARIVAARA-HEIKKINEN	Finland
Antti Edvard		
Arimo	TYNKKYNEN	Finland
Marie-Florence	BENNES	France
Johanna Chloe	BOUYE	France
Alain	CHABOD	France
Philippe	DARDANT	France
Françoise Marie- Bernard	DAUCÉ	France
Jessica Lucy	DE LEPARDA	France
Pascal Jean- Charles	DELUMEAU	France
Julie Chloe	JORE	France
Augustin Herve		
Marie	LABORDE	France
Véronique	LASSERRE-FY	France
Rosalie Jeanne Marie	LAURENT	France

Vincent Jean Pierre	LENA	France
Frédérique	LETENEUR	France
Anais Madeleine		
Azelie	MARIN	France
Yves Louis Michel		
Pierre	MARRY	France
Lemoine	MATHIEU	France
Cécile Marie	POLIVKA	France
Yann	RIVOAL	France
Chemsa	TORTCHINSKI	France
Julien	VELCOF	France
Catherine	WALLISKY	France
Daniel, Bernard	ZELDINE	France
Uwe Christian	AHRENS	Germany
Henning Georg	BESS	Germany
Gottfried	BRAMER	Germany
Maria	BRAMER	Germany
Christoph Johannes	BUERK	Germany
Ingo	BUETTNER	Germany
Regina	CORDES LARSON	Germany
Birgit	DAIBER	Germany
Dagmar Brigitte	DEUTGES	Germany
Katja	DOOSE	Germany
Susanne	DRAKE, DR.	Germany
Sebastian	GRAEFE	Germany
Susanne Rosemarie	GREITER, DR.	Germany
Janna	GREVE	Germany
Hedda	HAARS	Germany
Bernhard Thomas		
Otto	HECK	Germany
Maria Mechthild	HERKENHOFF	Germany
Reinhard	HESSE, DR.	Germany
Renate Eleonore	HOLZAPFEL	Germany
Tom Sobjerg	HOYEM	Germany
Juergen Alois		
Hermann	KEWITSCH	Germany
Gudula	KILIAS	Germany
Harald Adolf	KLIER	Germany
Peter Fritz	KOHLMEIER, DR.	Germany
Jutta Gisela	KRAUSE	Germany
Maren	KRIMMER	Germany
Sandra	LANGENBACH	Germany
Wolfgang Dietmar	LICHTER	Germany
Edeltraud Maria		
Theresia	LIER	Germany
Magdalena		
Friederike	METZLER	Germany

Maria	MILZOW	Germany
Wolfgang Detlef Helmut	MILZOW	Germany
Eva Juliane	MUELLER	Germany
Kirsten Katrin	MUELLER	Germany
Rainer Rudolf	OTTER	Germany
Thomas Klaus	OYE	Germany
Yvonne	PAPENDORF	Germany
Manfred Jens	PREISSLER	Germany
Norbert Hermann Mechthild	REINER	Germany
Christine Luise	RUENGER, DR.	Germany
Julia Franziska	RUPPEL	Germany
Brigitte	SCHMID	Germany
Elisabeth Adele	SCHMITZ	Germany
Janina Teresa Joachim Gustav Heinrich	STEINKRUEGER	Germany
Michael Peter	TSCHESCH	Germany
Robert	WAHLEN	Germany
Robert	WERNER	Germany
Rene Gunter Utto	WILDANGEL	Germany
Heinz Bernd	WITTICH	Germany
Timea	ANDICS	Hungary
Zsuzsanna	BARACSI	Hungary
Márton	BÉRES	Hungary
Eva Juliane	CSORBA	Hungary
Kata	SZEBELÉDI, DR.	Hungary
Katalin	KÓRÖSSY	Hungary
TAMÁS ANDRÁS	VASZARI	Hungary
John Paul	COAKLEY	Ireland
Patrick	DONNELLY	Ireland
Patrick	MAHER	Ireland
Geraldine Teresa	O'NEILL	Ireland
John	O'SULLIVAN	Ireland
Colin	SMITH	Ireland
Alessandro	GIONGO	Italy
Giacomo	IUS	Italy
Monica	LUONGO	Italy
Michele	NOVAGA	Italy
Federico	ORSI	Italy
Valentina	TROPIANO	Italy
Timur	AKHMETZHANOV	Kazakhstan
Altyn	AKHMETZHANOVA	Kazakhstan
Vitaliy	ALEXANDROV	Kazakhstan
Azhar	ALSHINBEKOVA	Kazakhstan
Aizhan	DUISEMBAYEVA	Kazakhstan

Nurgul	KAZHYTAYEVA	Kazakhstan
Marat	SARSENBAYEV	Kazakhstan
Mels	TOREKELDI	Kazakhstan
Galija	AGISEVA	Latvia
Reinis	BRUSBĀRDIS	Latvia
Ilja	MINKO	Latvia
Rolandas	AGINTAS	Lithuania
Edvardas	ALEKSANDRAS	Lithuania
Liudmila	BLINOVA	Lithuania
Ieva	CESNAITYTE	Lithuania
Marija	DOMARKAITE	Lithuania
Evaldas	MAROZAS	Lithuania
Skirmantas	STRIMAITIS	Lithuania
Dovile	VAISVILAITE	Lithuania
Alinda Bernadine Johanna	AALPOEL	Netherlands
Max	BADER	Netherlands
Joan Willem	COERT	Netherlands
Johanna Maria	FOKKEMA	Netherlands
Maarten	HOREMAN	Netherlands
Marc Carel	JANSEN	Netherlands
Mascha Juliette Marguerite Gemma	KNOESTER	Netherlands
Johanna Sophia Allegonda Maria	SCHOKKENBROEK	Netherlands
Adelheid Agnes Maria	STEENMAN	Netherlands
Esther Wilhelmina Henricus Johannes	VAN DEN HEUVEL	Netherlands
Antonius Maria	VAN OOSTERHOUT	Netherlands
Nadia	VERWAAL	Netherlands
Even Arvid	ARONSEN	Norway
Ane Storvestre	BJØRKUM	Norway
Snøfrid Byrløkken Sofie Kristine	EMTERUD	Norway
Andersen	FYHN	Norway
Hans Cato	HADDAL	Norway
Kersti Lina Margareta Ahrén	HELØE	Norway
Kristine	HØYLAND	Norway
Anne Sofie	MOLANDSVEEN	Norway
Turid Smith	POLFUS	Norway
Thea	RØKKE	Norway
Gry Tina Marie	TINDE	Norway
Emilia	BALA	Poland
Monika Anna	DOBKOWSKA	Poland
Rafal	JEWDOKIMOW	Poland
Lukasz	KASPEREK	Poland

Bartłomiej Leszek	KOKOSZKA	Poland
Roman Andrzej	KOWALCZUK	Poland
Aleksandra		
Krystyna	MIKULA	Poland
Grzegorz	NIZIO	Poland
Jadwiga	ROGOZA	Poland
Ewa Stanisława	SALKIEWICZ- MUNNERLYN	Poland
Zbigniew Tadeusz	SMUGA	Poland
Paulina Magdalena	SZYCKO	Poland
Gabriel	SZEKELY	Romania
Lubica	BINDOVA	Slovakia
Roman	HOSTAK	Slovakia
Martin	KARDOS	Slovakia
Matúš	KORBA	Slovakia
Matej	KRAMBERGER	Slovenia
PABLO	DESPORTES BIELSA	Spain
Cristina	FERNANDEZ TESORO	Spain
Ruth	FERRERO TURION	Spain
GUILLERMO	GARCIA MIGUELAÑEZ	Spain
PABLO	GUTIERREZ VEGA	Spain
MANUEL	HIDALGO TRENADO	Spain
	LOPEZ MEDEL	
Jesus Maria	BASCONES	Spain
Isabel	MENCHON LOPEZ	Spain
ELENA	VILLANUEVA OLIVO	Spain
Marie Ewa		
Elisabeth	BENDEGARD	Sweden
Carin Elina		
Birgersdotter	JONSSON	Sweden
Ulf Anders	OTTOSSON	Sweden
Konrad	RIKARDSON	Sweden
Ann-Sofie Marie	STEN	Sweden
Bernhard	ALBRECHT	Switzerland
Michele	ANDREOLI	Switzerland
Michele	CALASTRI	Switzerland
Shumit	CHANDA	Switzerland
Monica	GIAMBONINI	Switzerland
Fritz	KREBS	Switzerland
Ahmet Riza	DEMIRER	Turkey
Seçkin	KOSTEM	Turkey
Fiona Diana	ANDERSON	United Kingdom
Celia Anne	ANTHONY	United Kingdom
John Damian	EARLS	United Kingdom
Melanie Jane	LEATHERS	United Kingdom
Alan	LLOYD	United Kingdom
Stephen Spencer	PAUL	United Kingdom

Bernard Joseph	QUOROLL	United Kingdom
Deborah	ALEXANDER	USA
Syeda (Sameera)	ALI	USA
Joe	BABB	USA
Richard	BAINTER	USA
Julie	BARKER	USA
Pamela	BARRUS	USA
John	BENNETT	USA
Burdette	BURKHART	USA
Mathew	CAHILL	USA
Elizabeth	CANELLAKIS	USA
Jeffrey	CHINN	USA
David	COOK	USA
Robert	CRISP	USA
Derek	DICTSON	USA
Cynthia Rae	DOELL	USA
Daniel	DRIGOT	USA
Chase	FOSTER	USA
Alan	FRIEDMAN	USA
Thomas	GALLAGHER	USA
Vedat	GASHI	USA
Carol	GAULTNEY	USA
William	HASSALL	USA
Robert	HYAMS	USA
Aaron	JOHANSON	USA
Gail	KALINICH	USA
Gary	KAY	USA
Nancy	LUBIN	USA
Marianne	MAHAFFEY	USA
Jamelle	MCCAMPBELL	USA
Joseph	MCDONAGH	USA
Andrea (Shelley)	MCTHOMAS	USA
John Harold Thambydurai (Kumar)	MERRILL	USA
Hugh	MUTHUKUMARASWAMY	USA
Michel	NEIGHBOUR	USA
Margaret	NJANG	USA
Paula Jean	O'SHEA	USA
Nancy Q.	OSBORN	USA
Sima	OSBORNE	USA
Howard (Hooper)	OSDOBY	USA
Tristan	PENUUEL	USA
Katharine (Katya)	PIERCE	USA
Kathy	QUINN-JUDGE	USA
	SCHNARE	USA

Steven	SHAPIRO	USA
John David	STUBBS	USA
Ms. Jan	TYLER	USA
Carol	WAHL	USA
Timothy	WAHL	USA
Degee	WILHELM	USA
Caroleen	WILLIAMS	USA

LONG-TERM OBSERVERS

OSCE/ODIHR EOM Core Team

Ambassador Jan	Petersen	Norway	Head of Mission
Armen	Mazmanyanyan	Armenia	
Kakha	Inaishvili	Georgia	
Lela	Tsaava	Georgia	
Laszlo	Belagyi	Hungary	
Carlo	Pappalardo	Italy	
Roman	Railean	Moldova	
Katarzyna	Janki-Kowalczyk	Poland	
Konrad	Olszewski	Poland	
Iwona	Wasik	Poland	
Magdalena	Zgrzymska	Poland	
Raul	Muresan	Romania	
Masa	Janjusevic	Serbia	
Ivana	Stanojev	Serbia	
Ranko	Vukcevic	Serbia	
Martina	Ciganikova	Slovakia	
Marek	Mracka	Slovakia	
Anders	Eriksson	Sweden	
Karolina	Riedel	Sweden	

OSCE/ODIHR EOM Long-term Observers

Artur	Aghamalyan	Armenia
Hovhannes	Ghazaryan	Armenia
Anush	Hayrapetyan	Armenia
Anna	Papikyan	Armenia
Johannes	Schallert	Austria
Afiz	Aliyev	Azerbaijan
Daria	Zaleznicenka	Belarus
Suad	Salkic	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Marcela	Maskova	Czech Republic
Hanne	Bang	Denmark
Marielise	Berg-Sonne	Denmark

Niels Henrik Jermiin	Nielsen	Denmark
Ingrid Margrethe	Poulsen	Denmark
Ingmar Goesta	Hermansson	Finland
Helena Marja-Terttu	Laatio	Finland
Eeva Karoliina	Suhonen	Finland
Beatrix Francoise Elisabeth	Boonekamp	France
Juliette Marguerite Emma	Le Dore	France
Adeline Elise Emilie	Marquis	France
Sylvain	Ollier	France
Fritz	Birnstiel	Germany
Jana Catharina	Buergers	Germany
Maria Irene	Fellmann	Germany
Wolfgang Bernhard		
Gottfried Anton	Graf von Schmettau	Germany
Christa Friede	Mueller	Germany
Stefan	Steinhilber	Germany
Eithne	Mac Dermott	Ireland
Ilmira	Gafiatullina	Kazakhstan
Emil	Shakir Uulu	Kyrgyzstan
Elena	Gherciu	Moldova
Linda Elisabeth	Beijlsmit	Netherlands
Judith Petrina Arselina	Kiers	Netherlands
Onno van der Wind	Steenbergen	Netherlands
Toril	Lund	Norway
Eva-Kristin Urestad	Pedersen	Norway
Jon Roar	Strandenes	Norway
Milos	Stojadinovic	Serbia
Maria Rosa	Mora Acuna	Spain
Knut Lennart	Bergknut	Sweden
Tord Birger	Drugge	Sweden
Stig Lennart	Glans	Sweden
Tina Anna-Stina	Lund	Sweden
Monique	Nobs	Switzerland
Gabriela Ursula	Buettner	Switzerland
Zouhal	Avzalchoeva	Tajikistan
Alexander Newton	Anderson	United Kingdom
Peter Robert	Davies	United Kingdom
Julian William	Nundy	United Kingdom
Mark Burnidge	Waller	United Kingdom
Dmytro	Tuzhanskyi	Ukraine
Anna	Galan	Ukraine
Florence Mae	Barna	USA
Robert Harley	Brandstetter	USA
Joan Adele	Brown	USA
Susanne B	Cooper	USA

Helen Sen	Kornblum	USA
Lester Daniel	Margosian	USA
John Edward	Miller	USA
Robert Iverson	Paullin Jr	USA
Mitchell Lee	Polman	USA
Karen Ann	Reinhardt	USA
Douglas Bruce	Wake	USA
Marsha Ann	Weinerman	USA
Alexander	Kashubin	Uzbekistan

ABOUT THE OSCE/ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) is the OSCE's principal institution to assist participating States "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, to abide by the rule of law, to promote principles of democracy and (...) to build, strengthen and protect democratic institutions, as well as promote tolerance throughout society" (1992 Helsinki Summit Document). This is referred to as the OSCE human dimension.

The OSCE/ODIHR, based in Warsaw (Poland) was created as the Office for Free Elections at the 1990 Paris Summit and started operating in May 1991. One year later, the name of the Office was changed to reflect an expanded mandate to include human rights and democratization. Today it employs over 130 staff.

The OSCE/ODIHR is the lead agency in Europe in the field of **election observation**. Every year, it co-ordinates and organizes the deployment of thousands of observers to assess whether elections in the OSCE region are conducted in line with OSCE Commitments, other international obligations and standards for democratic elections and with national legislation. Its unique methodology provides an in-depth insight into the electoral process in its entirety. Through assistance projects, the OSCE/ODIHR helps participating States to improve their electoral framework.

The Office's **democratization** activities include: rule of law, legislative support, democratic governance, migration and freedom of movement, and gender equality. The OSCE/ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programs annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

The OSCE/ODIHR also assists participating States' in fulfilling their obligations to promote and protect **human rights** and fundamental freedoms consistent with OSCE human dimension commitments. This is achieved by working with a variety of partners to foster collaboration, build capacity and provide expertise in thematic areas including human rights in the fight against terrorism, enhancing the human rights protection of trafficked persons, human rights education and training, human rights monitoring and reporting, and women's human rights and security.

Within the field of **tolerance** and **non-discrimination**, the OSCE/ODIHR provides support to the participating States in strengthening their response to hate crimes and incidents of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. The OSCE/ODIHR's activities related to tolerance and non-discrimination are focused on the following areas: legislation; law enforcement training; monitoring, reporting on, and following up on responses to hate-motivated crimes and incidents; as well as educational activities to promote tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding.

The OSCE/ODIHR provides advice to participating States on their policies on **Roma and Sinti**. It promotes capacity-building and networking among Roma and Sinti communities, and encourages the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in policy-making bodies.

All ODIHR activities are carried out in close co-ordination and co-operation with OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, as well as with other international organizations. More information is available on the ODIHR website (www.osce.org/odihr).