



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

# REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

## EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

20 June 2021

### ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report



Warsaw  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>VOTER REGISTRATION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>CANDIDATE REGISTRATION .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>CAMPAIGN FINANCE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>MEDIA .....</b>	<b>17</b>
	A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT .....	17
	B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK L .....	18
	C. ODIHR EOM MEDIA MONITORING .....	18
<b>XI.</b>	<b>COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>XII.</b>	<b>CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>XIII.</b>	<b>ELECTION DAY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>XIV.</b>	<b>POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>XV.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
	A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS .....	27
	B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS .....	28
	<b>ANNEX I – ELECTION RESULTS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
	<b>ANNEX II: LIST OF OBSERVERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>ABOUT ODIHR .....</b>	<b>41</b>

**REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**  
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**ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report<sup>1</sup>**

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Following an invitation from the Armenian authorities and based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 28 to 30 April 2021, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 18 May to observe the 20 June 2021 early parliamentary elections. The ODIHR EOM assessed the compliance of the election process with OSCE commitments and other standards for democratic elections, as well as with domestic legislation. For election day, the ODIHR EOM joined efforts with delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM).

In its Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions issued on 21 June, the IEOM concluded that the elections “were competitive and generally well-managed within a short timeframe. However, they were characterized by intense polarization and marred by increasingly inflammatory rhetoric among key contestants. The legal framework is generally comprehensive, but the fact that amendments were adopted so close to the elections caused some legal uncertainty. The election administration conducted its work in a transparent, collegial and professional manner and enjoyed electoral stakeholders’ confidence. Voters were provided with a broad range of options, and fundamental rights and freedoms were generally respected, with contestants being able to campaign freely. However, the negative tone and the personality driven nature of the campaign hindered a policy-focused debate. Generally, women were sidelined throughout the campaign. Election day, including the vote count, was assessed positively overall.”

The decision to hold early parliamentary elections arose in the aftermath of anti-government protests following the signing of a ceasefire statement with Azerbaijan in November 2020. The ceasefire statement followed a 44-day war in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. The elections took place in the context of continuing tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The economic downturn, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the war, further impacted the electoral environment. National security issues dominated the political discourse, overshadowing debate on other policy issues, and harsh rhetoric exacerbated an already polarized political environment.

The legal framework is broadly conducive to the conduct of democratic elections and provided comprehensive regulation of most components of the electoral process, despite some previously identified shortcomings which remain unaddressed. The Electoral Code, adopted in 2016, was amended in April and May 2021, shortly before elections were called. The changes had been publicly debated and advocated and were supported by most political parties and civil society groups, and public outreach on the proposed electoral reforms was largely perceived as inclusive. However, the late adoption by parliament and subsequent entering into force of the amendments left limited time for the implementation of regulations and raising voters’ awareness of the new procedures.

Following the elimination of open territorial lists in the April amendments, voters were called upon to elect a minimum of 101 MPs for a five-year term, through a closed-list proportional system within a single nationwide constituency. In order to qualify for the distribution of mandates, political parties

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<sup>1</sup> The English version of this report is the only official document. An unofficial translation is available in Armenian.

had to obtain at least five per cent of votes cast, and alliances of political parties at least seven per cent. The system provides for compensatory mandates aimed at guaranteeing a “stable parliamentary majority” while also ensuring opposition representation of at least one-third of all seats. The law provides for up to four additional reserved seats in parliament, one for each of the four largest national minorities (Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds).

Elections are administered by a three-tiered system comprising the Central Election Commission (CEC), 38 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs), and 2,008 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). The CEC conducted its work in a transparent, collegial and professional manner, meeting all legal deadlines, despite a short time frame for preparations. While the CEC has the regulatory power to issue instructions, a significant proportion of clarifications issued on election-day procedures were not adopted in CEC sessions, nor were they the subject of formal CEC decisions. Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the capacity of the CEC to deliver on its mandate professionally. Some voiced apprehensions over the election administration’s ability to maintain its independence. While ODIHR EOM observers assessed the TECs as operating in a generally professional and transparent manner, TEC decisions were not published online, nor were they uniformly posted for public display, contrary to legal requirements.

PEC members were nominated by the respective TEC and the three parliamentary groups represented in the outgoing parliament. Many TECs were required to nominate additional candidates after parliamentary groups, in particular Bright Armenia, did not nominate sufficient candidates for all PECs. In keeping with the law, the PEC management positions were distributed among the groups in the outgoing parliament in proportion to their current representation, hence providing a large majority of the positions to the ruling party. Both CEC and TEC members expressed concern that many of the party-nominated PEC members, especially those serving as PEC chairpersons and secretaries, lacked the sufficient education and experience to effectively perform their tasks. Women accounted for two thirds of all PEC members but were under-represented at the CEC and the TEC level, and more generally in management positions in the election administration.

The voter register included around 2.6 million eligible citizens on election day, including a significant number of voters residing abroad who remained on the voter register because they maintain an official residence in Armenia. All citizens who are at least 18 years old on election day are eligible to vote, unless convicted of a serious crime or declared mentally incompetent by a court decision. Deprivation of the right to vote on the basis of a mental disability is contrary to international standards. In line with the law, voter lists were made available for public scrutiny before election day, and voters were able to request corrections. ODIHR EOM interlocutors were generally satisfied with the level of transparency and expressed no concerns with the accuracy of the voter register.

The Passport and Visa Department (PVD) of the police did not publish detailed information on updates made to the voter register and voter lists which, while not required by law, limited the overall transparency and accountability for the management of the voter register and voter lists. On election day, electronic voter authentication devices (VADs), which contained an electronic copy of the voter list for the respective polling station, were used to identify voters by scanning their ID documents and fingerprints. After election day, the CEC published scanned copies of the signed voter lists from all polling stations, as required by law. This requirement challenges international standards and best practices calling for the protection of data privacy and the maintenance of secrecy when it comes to the participation of individual voters. Nevertheless, in the context of this election, ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed support for this measure as an effective way to enhance transparency and prevent electoral fraud.

In an inclusive process, the CEC registered the candidate lists of 22 political parties and 4 alliances of political parties, with a total of 2,623 candidates, including 965 women (37 per cent), providing

voters with a broad range of options of political parties and alliances. Following the withdrawal of one political party, a total of 21 political parties and 4 alliances contested these elections. All candidate lists fully complied with the 30 per cent gender requirement and with the requirement that both genders be represented in each grouping of three consecutive candidates on the list. The law does not provide for the possibility of candidates to stand individually, contrary to paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

Fundamental rights and freedoms were generally respected, and contestants were able to campaign freely. For these early elections, the official campaign period was 12 days, in accordance with the law, compared to 35 to 45 days for regular elections. However, in the absence of regulation for the pre-campaign period, some parties began campaigning before this date. Some contestants voiced concerns to the ODIHR EOM that the short official campaign period privileged more established parties in these elections. The campaign was characterized by a high degree of polarization and was often confrontational. High levels of harsh, intolerant, inflammatory and discriminatory rhetoric in the period leading up to election day tainted the debate. Women were notably sidelined in campaign events, rarely participating as speakers. Furthermore, there was a notable absence of messages targeting women and national minority groups from contestants' campaigns. The ODIHR EOM observed incidents of pressure by political actors and employers on private-sector and public employees to attend campaign events. A number of allegations of vote-buying were also made to the IEOM, particularly against larger parties. Investigations of vote-buying were opened against opposition candidates.

Campaign financing rules allow for both public and private sources of funding. The law sets maximum amounts for campaign incomes and expenditures. While the rules are detailed, a number of shortcomings allow for circumvention of the legal provisions. Notably, and despite repeated and longstanding ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, the legal definition of campaign expenditures does not include organizational expenses, such as costs for office space, transportation, communications, and campaign staff, leaving the opportunity for contestants to use these expenses as a means to circumvent spending limits. The CEC's Oversight and Audit Service (OAS) is in charge of overseeing contestants' compliance with campaign finance legislation. All contesting parties and alliances complied with the deadlines for submitting financial reports. Of the reported expenditures, most were for campaign advertising and printed electoral materials. None of the contestants reported expenses in excess of the legal spending limits. The OAS posted the financial reports online, which contributed to financial transparency.

Freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by the Constitution, was respected. The media environment is diverse, though many private broadcasters have strong political affiliations. Television remains the primary source of political information, although the use of social networks is increasingly significant. The law provides contesting parties and alliances with free airtime on public broadcasters and allows them to buy advertising on public and private media. ODIHR EOM media monitoring showed that several major outlets made a visible effort to cover most electoral contestants, contributing to the information available for voters to make an informed choice. At the same time, some channels that are perceived to be openly affiliated with particular parties gave those contestants preferential treatment. Public television provided generally balanced coverage of contestants; however, the broadcaster edited an advertising spot of an opposition party on the basis of allegedly defamatory language. A complaint filed on the action was deemed inadmissible by the Commission for Television and Radio. Several newly established parties claimed a lack of coverage by traditional media and opted to use social networks instead. A number of media outlets organized debates and interviews, most notably the public television. However, more than half of the leaders of contesting parties and alliances declined to participate in the final two debates of public television, which negatively impacted the informational value of these debates.

Under the Electoral Code, decisions, actions, and inactions of election commissions can be appealed to the corresponding next higher-level commission, while complaints against the CEC are adjudicated by the Administrative Court. Despite previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, the rules on legal standing to file complaints remain narrow. The CEC received 22 complaints, and 21 appeals against CEC decisions were addressed to the Administrative Court before election day. Discussions on complaints by the CEC were open and collegial, and all participants had the opportunity to express their views, and decisions were posted in keeping with official deadlines. Administrative Court hearings observed by the ODIHR EOM were held in a transparent manner in open sessions, and participants were provided with opportunities to present their arguments to the court. However, the Court was not always consistent in its interpretation of the electoral law.

By the 5 June deadline, the CEC accredited 19 citizen observer organizations with a total of 8,748 observers, 8 international organizations, and 70 members of diplomatic missions and foreign delegations to observe the elections. Some citizen observer groups expressed concerns that the early deadline for submitting applications for accreditation, 15 days before election day, made it difficult to recruit observers. Despite prior ODIHR recommendations, the Electoral Code requires citizen observer groups to include an explicit reference to democracy and human rights protection in their charter for at least one year prior to the announcement of an election, thereby placing an unnecessary restriction on the opportunity to observe.

Election day was generally peaceful, with a voter turnout of 49.4 per cent reported by the CEC. IEOM observers positively assessed the opening and voting processes in the overwhelming majority of polling stations observed. However, IEOM observers reported some incidents of party or alliance proxies interfering in polling processes, frequent overcrowding, as well as a general disregard for COVID-19 protection measures. The majority of polling stations were not accessible for persons with physical disabilities. IEOM observers reported some cases of tension or unrest, as well as isolated indications of vote buying and pressure on voters. IEOM observers reported no problems with the VADs, and voter identification procedures were almost universally adhered to. IEOM observers reported only a few cases of procedural violations, such as group voting, as well as some shortcomings in maintaining the secrecy of the vote. Despite a limited number of serious procedural errors or violations, the vote count was assessed positively in most polling stations where it was observed and was characterized by a high level of transparency. However, IEOM observers reported cases of undue interference, mostly by proxies, in the count. Reconciliation and counting procedures were followed overall, although a significant number of PECs had problems completing the results protocol. Tabulation procedures at TECs were mostly followed, with very few procedural omissions or violations reported. However, in many TECs, the handover process was poorly organized and there were frequent reports of insufficient space, and overcrowding negatively affected the process. All TECs observed by the IEOM publicly posted aggregated intermediate results every three hours, as required by law. IEOM observers reported no interference in the tabulation process.

In accordance with the law, on 22 June the CEC announced and published the preliminary results disaggregated by polling station. A total of 83 recounts took place, across 16 TECs, between 22 and 25 June. The majority of recounts identified either minor discrepancies or made no changes to the result. The recounts observed by the ODIHR EOM were conducted in a professional and transparent manner.

Despite previous recommendations, the law limits the legal standing to bring appeals against voting results. The Administrative Court informed the ODIHR EOM that it had not received any appeals related to voting results. The CEC received four complaints requesting that the overall results of the elections be declared invalid. The CEC considered the complaints and stated that there had been no violations either during the preparations for elections or on election day that could have impacted on the election results. Four political parties and alliances appealed the CEC decision on the final election

results to the Constitutional Court. On 17 July, the Constitutional Court rejected the appeals and left in force the CEC decision on the election results. The court established that while some of the alleged violations took place, they were isolated and could not have affected the overall results of the elections.

This report offers a number of recommendations to support efforts to bring elections in the Republic of Armenia closer in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Priority recommendations relate to the legal framework, the election administration, suffrage rights, voter registration, the misuse of administrative resources, sanctions for campaign violations, campaign finance, and the public broadcast media. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

## **II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Following an invitation by the Armenian authorities to observe the 20 June 2021 early parliamentary elections, and based on the recommendation of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 28 to 30 April 2021, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 18 May. The mission, led by Eoghan Murphy, consisted of a 16-member core team based in Yerevan and 26 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed on 27 May to 10 locations around the country. Mission members were drawn from 21 OSCE participating States. The EOM remained in the country until 3 July.

For election-day observation, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Margareta Cederfelt was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observers. The OSCE PA delegation was led by Kari Henriksen, and the PACE delegation was led by George Katrougalos. Each of the institutions involved in this IEOM has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. In total, 344 observers from 37 OSCE participating States were deployed, including 247 observers deployed by ODIHR, as well as 73-member delegation from the OSCE PA, and a 24-member delegation from the PACE; 41 per cent of members of the IEOM were women.

The ODIHR EOM assessed the compliance of the election processes with OSCE commitments and other standards for democratic elections, as well as domestic legislation. This final report follows a Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions which was released on 21 June 2021.<sup>2</sup>

The ODIHR EOM wishes to thank the authorities of the Republic of Armenia for their invitation to observe the elections, and the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its assistance and co-operation. It also expresses its appreciation to other national and local state institutions, political parties and alliances, candidates, civil society, media, international community representatives, and other interlocutors for sharing their views and for their co-operation.

## **III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Armenia is a parliamentary republic with executive power vested in the prime minister as the head of government. On 18 March 2021, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced that early parliamentary

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<sup>2</sup> See previous [ODIHR election reports on Armenia](#).

elections would be held on 20 June. In compliance with the relevant legal deadlines, he resigned on 25 April, and the elections were called via presidential decree on 10 May. The decision to hold early elections arose in the aftermath of anti-government protests following the signing of a ceasefire statement with Azerbaijan, brokered by the Russian Federation in November 2020. The ceasefire statement followed a 44-day war in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

The elections took place in an atmosphere of continuing tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The national security situation dominated the political discourse during these elections. The economic downturn, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the war, further impacted the electoral environment. The political environment leading up to the elections was highly polarized, often personality-driven, and characterized by aggressive accusations and inflammatory rhetoric.<sup>3</sup>

The most recent parliamentary elections were early elections, held in December 2018, which took place following the resignation of Prime Minister Pashinyan. He had come to the position in May 2018 through a majority vote of the National Assembly following the resignation of Serzh Sargsyan. Mr. Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia had won the April 2017 parliamentary elections, however, his appointment as prime minister in April 2018 after having served as president for the preceding decade triggered protests and resulted in his resignation. The My Step alliance led by Mr. Pashinyan's Civil Contract party won the 2018 elections with 70.4 per cent of the votes cast and 88 of the 132 seats in parliament. Prosperous Armenia and Bright Armenia were the only other parties to pass the 5 per cent threshold with 8.3 per cent (26 seats) and 6.4 per cent (18 seats), respectively.

Women are underrepresented in public office. Before these elections, women held 24 per cent of the seats in parliament, one of 12 ministerial posts, and none of the governorships of the 10 regions of Armenia.

#### IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Parliamentary elections are regulated by the 1995 Constitution (last amended by referendum in 2015), the 2016 Electoral Code, and other legislation.<sup>4</sup> Armenia is a party to the main international treaties related to democratic elections.<sup>5</sup> Overall, the legal framework is conducive to the conduct of democratic elections.

The electoral legal framework provides comprehensive regulation of issues related to election administration, voter lists and voter identification. While the rules on candidate registration, campaigning and campaign financing are detailed, certain shortcomings previously noted by ODIHR and the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), remain unaddressed.<sup>6</sup> These include restrictions on the rights of persons with dual

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<sup>3</sup> Criminal law proceedings were initiated against former President Robert Kocharyan in July 2018 on charges of overthrowing the constitutional order. These proceedings ended in March 2021 following a decision by the Constitutional Court finding the article with which he was charged unconstitutional because it was not in line with the principles of certainty and proportionality (see Complaints and Appeals).

<sup>4</sup> Including the Law on Political Parties, the Law on Peaceful Assemblies, the Law on Administrative Procedures, the Law on Administrative Offences, and the Civil Code and the Criminal Code.

<sup>5</sup> Including the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 2003 UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Armenia is also a member of the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

<sup>6</sup> See the 2016 ODIHR and Venice Commission Joint Opinions on [the Draft Electoral Code](#) and on [the Electoral Code](#), respectively.



citizenship to stand for election, the short timeframe for reviewing campaign-finance reporting, as well as the narrow definition of campaign expenditures. The legal framework regulating the handling of complaints and appeals and addressing electoral violations, while adequate, could also benefit from further review (*See Campaign Finance and Complaint and Appeals*).

The Electoral Code was adopted in 2016 and has been amended several times since then.<sup>7</sup> In April and May 2021, shortly before elections were called, parliament adopted two sets of amendments.<sup>8</sup> The 1 April amendments eliminated open territorial lists of candidates and introduced corresponding procedural changes, among others, to candidate registration, the distribution of mandates, and election-day procedures. These amendments were adopted by a majority of 82 out of 132 members of parliament (MPs) all but 2 of whom were from the ruling party.<sup>9</sup> While the move to a single nationwide constituency had long been debated and advocated for by many political parties and civil society actors, a change of this significance so close to election day is not in line with good practice and some ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns that the changes were made too close to the elections.<sup>10</sup> The President of the Republic opted not to sign the amendments, citing their timing and lack of consensus in the parliament.<sup>11</sup> A second, more comprehensive, package of amendments was adopted on 7 May 2021. Although these amendments were not applicable for these elections, their adoption coincided with the beginning of the electoral process, and most ODIHR EOM interlocutors mentioned that they had not had sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the newly adopted law as they were focused on the ongoing elections. Until both sets of amendments were adopted and signed, electoral stakeholders were uncertain which amendments would apply to these elections, thereby affecting legal certainty and leaving limited time for implementing regulations and informing voters on new procedures.<sup>12</sup>

*To ensure legal certainty, changes to the electoral legal framework should be made well in advance of elections, through an inclusive process. The timeframe between the adoption of legal changes and their implementation should allow for sufficient voter education and for electoral stakeholders to be able to familiarize themselves with the applicable rules.*

In these early parliamentary elections, a minimum of 101 MPs were to be elected, through a closed-list proportional system within a single nationwide constituency. MPs are elected for a five-year term. In order to qualify for the distribution of mandates, political parties must obtain at least five per cent of votes cast, while alliances of two or more political parties are required to obtain at least seven per cent.<sup>13</sup> An amendment reducing the five per cent threshold was adopted in May but did not take effect

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<sup>7</sup> The 2018 amendments to the Electoral Code and other legislation in relation to parliamentary elections introduced, among others, measures against the misuse of state resources, lifted restrictions on the accreditation of media representatives for elections and set more stringent sanctions for electoral violations.

<sup>8</sup> Public outreach on the proposed reforms began in 2020 and the proposed reforms were reviewed. See the ODIHR and Venice Commission [Urgent Joint Opinion on Draft Amendments to the Electoral Code and Related Legislation](#).

<sup>9</sup> Prosperous Armenia and Bright Armenia did not participate in the vote. Bright Armenia mainly objected to the timing of changes; Prosperous Armenia had been boycotting most parliamentary votes since January 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Section II.2.b of the Venice Commission [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters states that](#) ‘[t]he fundamental elements of electoral law, in particular the electoral system proper, membership of electoral commissions and the drawing of constituency boundaries, should not be open to amendment less than one year before an election or should be written in the constitution or at a level higher than ordinary law.’

<sup>11</sup> Following the expiration of the constitutionally mandated 21-day deadline for the president’s signature, the amendments were signed into law by the Speaker of Parliament and entered into legal force on 27 April 2021.

<sup>12</sup> The CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that in order to update its instructions on time, it started the process based on the draft law, while uncertain which provisions would ultimately be adopted. [ODIHR and the Venice Commission](#) had previously noted that “any legislative change taking place so close before an election should be in principle avoided as it leads to uncertainty. Additionally, the public and all stakeholders have to adapt to new rules in a tight time frame.”

<sup>13</sup> [ODIHR and the Venice Commission](#) previously noted that “alliances might provide more cooperation and stable government. Therefore, the threshold for alliances could be the same as for political parties.”

for these elections. The Electoral Code stipulates that if less than three parties and/or alliances pass the threshold, the three parties or alliances with the highest number of votes gain parliamentary representation. In addition to the MPs elected under the proportional system, the law provides for up to four reserved seats in parliament, one for each of the four largest national minorities (Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians, and Kurds).<sup>14</sup>

The Constitution mandates a proportional electoral system for parliamentary elections, and a multiparty system. The Constitution also stipulates that the Electoral Code shall guarantee a “stable parliamentary majority” (which the Electoral Code defines as 54 per cent of seats in parliament) in order to form a government. In the event that the winning party or alliance list obtains at least 50 per cent of seats plus one, but falls short of 54 per cent, that party or alliance will be assigned additional seats in order for it to reach the required stable majority.<sup>15</sup> If no single party or alliance wins a 50 per cent plus one majority, and no political parties or alliances are able to form a coalition within 6 days of the finalization of the results, a second round between the top two candidate lists is held 28 days after the first election day. In the second round, these two remaining contesting parties or alliances are permitted to form new political alliances with other parties that ran in the first round.

## V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Elections are administered by a three-tiered system comprising the CEC, 38 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs), and 2,008 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). The CEC is a permanent and professional body composed of seven members who are elected for a six-year term, for a maximum of two consecutive terms. The CEC, in its current composition, was appointed in October 2016.<sup>16</sup> Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the capacity of the CEC to deliver on its mandate professionally. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors voiced apprehensions, however, over the election administration’s ability to maintain its independence.

The CEC conducted its work in a transparent, collegial, and efficient manner, meeting all legal deadlines despite a short timeframe for preparations. Its sessions were livestreamed and attended by party and alliance proxies, observers, and the media.<sup>17</sup> Meeting agendas and decisions were published in a timely manner on the CEC website. The CEC developed election-day procedures and guidelines for PEC members, Voter Authentication Device (VAD) specialists, as well as for observers, proxies, and media representatives.

While the CEC has the regulatory power to issue instructions, a significant proportion of clarifications issued on election-day procedures were not adopted in CEC sessions, nor were they the subject of formal CEC decisions. Importantly, the determination of ballot validity, the sealing of ballot boxes, and procedures relating to mobile ballot boxes were not adequately regulated. COVID-related procedures for polling operations were adopted, though these did not address possible overcrowding.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on the most recent census, conducted in 2011, Yezidis accounted for 1.1 per cent of the population, Russians for 0.3 per cent, and Assyrians and Kurds for less than 0.1 per cent each. [ODIHR and the Venice Commission](#) previously noted that “the arrangement of extra seats for national minorities may change the political balance among the parties.” In the outgoing parliament, the My Step alliance held all four reserved seats.

<sup>15</sup> The Electoral Code also foresees that if the winning party or coalition wins more than two thirds of the total number of seats in parliament, smaller parties and alliances that passed the threshold will be assigned additional seats so that the opposition parties combined reach one third of the total number of seats.

<sup>16</sup> Upon the recommendation of a standing parliamentary committee, CEC members are elected by a parliamentary vote of at least three-fifths of all MPs. Prior to 2016, CEC members were nominated by the president. Five members, including the chairperson, deputy chairperson and secretary, were first nominated in 2011. Two other members were first nominated in 2014 and 2015.

<sup>17</sup> The CEC held two closed-door sessions on 11 and 12 June which addressed criminal proceedings initiated by the Prosecutor General’s Office.

*All regulations and clarifications on electoral procedures, including ballot validity, the sealing of ballot boxes and the counting and tabulation of votes, including those cast by mobile voting, should be comprehensive, adopted in formal sessions of the CEC, and applied uniformly.*

ODIHR EOM observers and many interlocutors noted that the visibility of the CEC's voter-education campaign, launched 20 days before election day, remained limited across the country. It included posters, brochures, as well as TV and radio advertisements on new voting procedures, including in the languages of the four main national minorities, as well as in formats accessible for persons with visual and hearing impairments. Civil society organizations developed materials for persons with intellectual and physical disabilities. While the law provides for assisted voting, the accessibility of polling stations remains particularly limited for persons with physical disabilities (*see Election Day*), and there are no other appropriate voting procedures or measures guaranteeing persons with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy political rights on an equal basis with others.<sup>18</sup>

*Consideration should be given to introducing additional measures which would enhance participation in the election process by persons with disabilities.*

TECs are permanent professional bodies composed of seven members appointed by the CEC for a six-year term. ODIHR EOM observers assessed the TECs as professional and collaborative. TEC sessions were open and characterized by a consensus-led approach. Contrary to legal requirements, the public display of TEC decisions was not consistent, and TEC decisions were not published. In addition, the law does not require TEC result protocols to be published, which limits the transparency of the work of the election administration and its accountability for the management of the electoral process.

*The CEC should publish in a systematic and timely manner the schedule of TEC sessions, all TEC decisions, and the signed TEC results protocols with results disaggregated by polling station, on its website. In addition, all information and documents of public interest, including preliminary results protocols and preliminary voter lists, should remain available online.*

PECs are temporary bodies formed for each election, with a minimum of seven members nominated by parliamentary groups as well as by the TECs. For these elections, each PEC was composed of seven to eight members, two of whom were nominated by the respective TEC and two by each of the three parliamentary groups represented in the outgoing parliament. While most PECs were formed by 2 June, in accordance with the CEC calendar, many TECs were required to nominate additional candidates after parliamentary groups, in particular Bright Armenia, did not to nominate sufficient candidates for all PECs.<sup>19</sup> In line with the law, the positions of PEC chairperson and secretary were distributed among the parliamentary groups in the outgoing parliament in proportion to their current representation, hence providing a large majority of PEC management positions to the ruling party. While everybody wishing to be considered for PEC membership must first pass a certification course and test, the law does not provide minimum qualifications for PEC membership. Both CEC and TEC members expressed concern at the lack of training and experience of many partisan-nominated PEC members, especially PEC chairpersons and secretaries.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Article 29 of the [CRPD](#) provides for equal participation in political and public life. A [2020 assessment of the accessibility of polling stations](#) conducted by the "Agate" Rights Defense Center for Women with Disabilities NGO and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) identified that of the 1,987 polling stations assessed (99 per cent out of a total of 2,008 polling stations), none could be identified as fully accessible.

<sup>19</sup> The list of PEC members published by the CEC on election day does not indicate party affiliation.

<sup>20</sup> The CEC confirmed that a significant number of partisan PEC members had no prior experience. One TEC chairperson complained to ODIHR EOM observers that some partisan PEC members, including chairpersons, were not fully literate.

*To enhance the integrity and professionalism of the election administration and of electoral operations, the CEC could consider prescribing minimum qualifying criteria for PEC chairpersons and secretaries and ensure that all party-nominated PEC members are sufficiently trained. Parliamentary groups and parties should consider giving priority to the most qualified candidates.*

The trainings of PEC members were positively assessed by ODIHR EOM observers.<sup>21</sup> Several TEC members were of the opinion that PEC training sessions should be longer and more comprehensive. According to the TECs, attendance ranged from 75 per cent to over 90 per cent. The CEC confirmed that most PEC members who did not attend the trainings were party-nominated, including those that served as PEC chairpersons and secretaries. While PEC members who resigned at short notice were promptly replaced by the nominating parliamentary groups and the TECs, some replacements could not attend the trainings.<sup>22</sup>

The CEC and all TECs complied with the legal requirement to include at least two members of each gender. Three of the seven CEC members are women (42 per cent), including the deputy chairperson. At the TEC level, out of 266 members 94 were women (35 per cent), with only a few holding decision-making positions, including two chairpersons (five per cent) and six deputy chairpersons (16 per cent). Gender-disaggregated data on the overall membership and management positions at TEC and PEC levels needs to be extracted and is not readily available, which is at odds with international standards.<sup>23</sup>

*In line with international standards, national authorities such as the CEC and the PVD should provide gender-disaggregated data on the electoral process, including on registered voters on the preliminary and final voter lists, the composition of lower-level election commissions, the number of candidates per list, and voter turnout.*

## VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens who are at least 18 years old on election day are eligible to vote, unless convicted of a serious crime or declared mentally incompetent by a court decision. Deprivation of the right to vote on the basis of a mental disability is contrary to international standards.<sup>24</sup>

*To ensure equal suffrage in accordance with international standards, restrictions to the right to vote based on mental disability should be removed.*

Voter registration is passive, with voter information being provided automatically by the State Population Register. The voter register is maintained by the Passport and Visa Department (PVD) of the police and includes all eligible citizens who maintain a permanent residence in Armenia. The total number of registered voters on 20 June was 2,595,512. While voters abroad are not entitled to vote, a significant number of voters residing abroad remain on the voter register because they maintain an

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<sup>21</sup> CEC trainings of PEC members and VAD specialists were organized with the assistance of IFES and UNDP, respectively.

<sup>22</sup> According to the CEC, about 7 per cent of the approximately 16,000 PEC members had to be replaced due to resignations.

<sup>23</sup> According to paragraph 48d of [CEDAW General Recommendation No. 23](#), State parties should provide “statistical data, disaggregated by sex, showing the percentage of women relative to men who enjoy those rights”.

<sup>24</sup> According to Articles 12 and 29 of the [CRPD](#), “State Parties shall recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life” and ensure their “right and opportunity [...] to vote and be elected”. Paragraph 48 of [General Comment No. 1 to Article 12 of the CRPD](#) states that “a person’s decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising [...] the right to vote [and] the right to stand for election”.

official residence in Armenia.<sup>25</sup> None of the ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed any concern with regards to the accuracy of the voter register.

The legal framework provides extensive measures ensuring the transparency and accessibility of voter lists, with public display of voter lists and the publication of the lists online in searchable and downloadable versions. Preliminary voter lists, which were removed from the website of the police upon the publication of the final voter lists, were displayed at polling stations for public scrutiny by the 31 May deadline. Voters were able to request corrections, inclusions and deletions concerning themselves or other voters until 10 June.<sup>26</sup> According to the PVD, 16,563 voters applied for a temporary change of address for these elections, including 8,207 PEC members. The total of changes represented 0.1 to 0.5 per cent of registered voters per TEC (with a maximum of 333 inclusions and 345 removals), with the exception of TEC 23 in Vanadzor city (Lori region) where such changes concerned over 2 per cent of registered voters (1,978 net removals). Based on the number of submitted PVD statements, a total of 1,067 voters omitted from the voter lists were included on election day on supplementary voter lists across 278 polling stations around the country. Notably, the city of Vanadzor accounted for over 54 per cent of these voters with 579 voters added on supplementary voter lists.

Data published by the PVD was not disaggregated according to gender, however, information provided by the PVD upon request of the ODIHR EOM indicated that women represent approximately 53 per cent of registered voters. The PVD also did not publish details on the type and the total number of updates made to the voter register and the voter lists, including on newly added and deceased voters, thereby limiting the overall transparency and accountability for the management of the voter register and voter lists.

*The PVD should publish regular and detailed information on the type and number of updates and corrections performed, including about newly added and deceased voters.*

On election day, voters were identified through the scanning of their ID document and fingerprints with electronic VADs, which contained an electronic copy of the voter list for the respective polling station. In accordance with the law, on 22 June the CEC published scanned copies of the signed voter lists from all polling stations, allowing for public verification until the adjudication of election disputes.<sup>27</sup> This requirement challenges international standards and best practices calling for the protection of data privacy and the maintenance of secrecy when it comes to the participation of individual voters.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, in the context of these elections ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed support for the measure, as an effective way to enhance transparency and prevent electoral malfeasance.

*While ensuring meaningful access to the voter lists, consideration should be given to safeguarding voter data privacy and secrecy of participation in the vote, including through confidentiality measures.*

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<sup>25</sup> Only diplomatic and military staff abroad and their family are allowed to vote. Five hundred out of 650 voters registered on diplomatic and military voter lists participated through electronic voting from 11 to 13 June.

<sup>26</sup> Applications on behalf of another voter must be notarized. In total, 2,415 voters were removed from the voter lists. The PVD identified a total of 2,287 unregistered deaths abroad, based on death certificates submitted by family members and door-to-door verifications conducted by the PVD.

<sup>27</sup> The April 2021 amendments specify that the signed voter lists should remain available until the tabulation of results by the CEC or, if appeals are filed, until their adjudication. The signed voter lists were at times inaccessible due to technical problems with the CEC website.

<sup>28</sup> See paragraph IV.A of the Venice Commission's [Interpretative Declaration to the Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters on the Publication of Lists of Voters Having Participated in Elections](#), and paragraph 10 of [General Comment 16 to the ICCPR](#) on the right to privacy. Point 4.c of the Code of Good Practice on Electoral Matters also states that "the lists of persons actually voting should not be published."

## VII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

For parliamentary elections, political parties and alliances of political parties can each submit a single closed list for the nationwide constituency, containing between 80 and 300 candidates. Women and men must account for at least 30 per cent of the candidates, with a requirement that both genders are represented in each grouping of three consecutive candidates on the list.<sup>29</sup> This quota increased from 25 per cent in the 2018 elections.

In order to be eligible to stand as a candidate, one must be an eligible voter of at least 25 years of age, be a citizen of and resident in Armenia for the preceding four years, and have command of the Armenian language. Citizens holding another nationality are not eligible to stand as candidates. Although Armenia accepts dual citizenship, recent amendments to the Criminal Code criminalized concealment of dual citizenship, including in order to stand for elections, making it punishable by up to five years of imprisonment.<sup>30</sup>

*Restrictions on candidate rights for persons with more than one citizenship should be reconsidered, and related criminalization should be removed.*

Judges, prosecutors, military personnel, police officers, other categories of civil servants, and election commission members are also not permitted to stand as candidates. Candidate lists may include up to 30 per cent of non-party members. The law does not provide the possibility for candidates to stand individually, which is contrary to paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.<sup>31</sup>

In an inclusive process, the CEC registered the candidate lists of 22 political parties and 4 alliances.<sup>32</sup> Following the withdrawal of one political party by the 10 June deadline,<sup>33</sup> a total of 25 contesting lists remained, composed of 2,498 candidates, of whom 925 were women (37 per cent).<sup>34</sup> All lists complied with the gender requirement, including after the withdrawal and cancellation of the registration of 39 candidates. Only two of the 25 candidate lists were headed by a woman. Among the contestants were the three largest parties represented in the outgoing parliament,<sup>35</sup> as well as those

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<sup>29</sup> The 30 per cent gender quota was adopted in 2016 but entered into force for the first time for these elections, in line with transitional provisions of the Electoral Code. The gender requirement does not apply to the section of the list with candidates representing national minorities.

<sup>30</sup> The ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Urgent Opinion on Amendments to the Electoral Code and Related Legislation](#) stated in para. 109 that the amendment introducing criminal sanctions for violating the prohibition of dual citizenship “should be considered in the light of Article 3 of the First Protocol of the ECHR. A blanket restriction on the right to stand for election due to dual citizenship would likely be considered a disproportional restriction. As long as Armenia accepts dual citizenship, holding two citizenships should not be ground for ineligibility to be elected to the parliament and thus not criminalized.” See also European Court of Human Rights, *Tănase v. Moldova*, 27 April 2010, [Application No. 7/08](#).

<sup>31</sup> Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document commits OSCE participating States to “respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination”.

<sup>32</sup> Twenty-six candidates from 12 different candidate lists were denied registration due to missing supporting documents (i) proving Armenian citizenship and residency over the last four years (19 cases), (ii) proving knowledge of the Armenian language (15 cases), (iii) providing the written consent of the candidate to be included in the list (8 cases), (iv) missing the copy of the ID document or passport (3 cases), and document falsification related to the proof of residency (2 cases).

<sup>33</sup> The party which withdrew was the Armenian Eagles, United Armenia party.

<sup>34</sup> In total, 35 candidates withdrew their applications, while the registration of 4 candidates was cancelled due to the submission of falsified documents.

<sup>35</sup> Civil Contract, Bright Armenia, and Prosperous Armenia.

affiliated with all three presidents to have held office between 1991 and 2018.<sup>36</sup> One alliance and three parties registered a total of 13 candidates for the four seats reserved for national minorities.<sup>37</sup>

All registered parties and alliances submitted the required financial deposit of 10 million Armenian dram (AMD).<sup>38</sup> The deposit is returned if a list obtains seats in parliament or more than four per cent of valid votes.

## VIII. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

For these early elections and in accordance with the law, the official campaign period was 12 days, compared to 35 to 45 days for regular elections.<sup>39</sup> The official campaign period commenced on 7 June and ended on 18 June, with campaigning prohibited on the day before election day and on election day itself.<sup>40</sup> The campaign silence was generally respected, but following a complaint by the With Honor alliance, the CEC issued a warning against Civil Contract candidate Nikol Pashinyan for campaigning on the day before election day; the CEC decision was overturned after election day by the Administrative Court.<sup>41</sup>

As in the pre-campaign period, the national security situation dominated the political discourse in the campaign period. The economic situation, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war, was the next most important campaign issue. The polarization intensified during the campaign period, with some contestants levelling derogatory and inflammatory accusations against one another, rather than engaging in issue-based discussions.<sup>42</sup> ODIHR EOM observers reported increasingly high levels of intolerant, inflammatory and discriminatory rhetoric in the period leading up to election day. The Human Rights Defender criticized the use of such rhetoric and called on all contestants, in particular current leaders (or officials), such as the prime minister, to refrain from using this type of language.<sup>43</sup> The CEC also called on contestants to refrain from such rhetoric.<sup>44</sup>

*Public officials, political parties, their candidates and supporters should refrain from using inflammatory rhetoric. Clearly defined non-criminal dissuasive measures should be introduced, while protecting freedom of speech.*

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<sup>36</sup> Levon Ter-Petrosyan (Armenian National Congress), Robert Kocharyan (Armenia Alliance) and Serzh Sargsyan (With Honor alliance). While Mr. Sargsyan was not a candidate in these elections, he featured prominently in the alliance's campaign.

<sup>37</sup> Each party and alliance can nominate up to four candidates for each of the four national minority groups with a reserved seat in parliament (for a maximum of 16 minority candidates on each list).

<sup>38</sup> The May 2021 amendments to the Electoral Code decrease the deposit to AMD 7.5 million for political parties and increase it to AMD 15 million for alliances, effective from 2022. EUR 1 is approximately AMD 635.

<sup>39</sup> Several contestants voiced concerns regarding the short campaign period, stating that in combination with the recent amendments to the Electoral Code, it gave them too little time to inform voters about their programme. The majority of the 25 competitors did not actively campaign in most regions.

<sup>40</sup> Campaign-related content posted before the campaign-silence period may remain online during the silence period (Electoral Code, Art. 19).

<sup>41</sup> Mr. Pashinyan posted a video on his [Facebook page](#) during the campaign silence period urging citizens to vote.

<sup>42</sup> Prime Minister Pashinyan accused former President Kocharyan of being part of a "criminal gang" and threatened to "break the teeth of that pack." Mr. Pashinyan also announced his intent to conduct a purge of the public service, removing all those in opposition, a "staff massacre" and said that he has a "vendetta" against those whom he accuses of working against him within the administration or as leaders of private businesses (during a Civil Contract [rally in Talin](#) on 8 June). At rallies observed by ODIHR EOM observers (in Ashtarak on 8 June, in Yerevan on 11 June, in Tashir and Vanadzor on 12 June), former President Kocharyan accused the current prime minister of being a "traitor" and "lunatic" and stated that he should leave the country.

<sup>43</sup> See [31 May 2021 statement](#) by the Human Rights Defender.

<sup>44</sup> On 7 June, the CEC issued a [call](#) to political parties to adhere to the Electoral Code and to exclude insults, hate speech and calls to violence during the campaign.

Fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly were generally respected throughout the campaign, and contestants were able to campaign freely throughout the country. While voters had a wide range of options of political parties and alliances, the most visible parties and alliances in the campaign were Prime Minister Pashinyan's Civil Contract and former President Robert Kocharyan's Armenia Alliance. Campaign messages were aggressive, with accusations of corruption against former presidents Kocharyan and Sargsyan from one side and criticism of perceived failures of the current administration, particularly in relation to the conduct of the war, from the other side. Negative campaign materials targeting Mr. Kocharyan were also noted before and on election day near some polling stations, and several types of black campaign spots notably against Mr. Pashinyan were circulating on social media platforms as well as on TV, including public TV.<sup>45</sup>

ODIHR EOM long-term observers noted that in-person campaign activities took place peacefully around the country.<sup>46</sup> Many observed events did not adhere to government mandated measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. Marches, car parades, door-to-door canvassing, public meetings and meetings with specific groups, as well as extensive use of social networks and advertisements on television were features of the campaign. Contestants also made widespread use of billboards and posters, including in places allocated by the CEC equally to contestants for paid advertising. Parties and alliances reported concerns relating to the destruction of posters and billboards during the campaign, but only a few official complaints were filed.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the 30 per cent gender quota, women were notably sidelined in campaign events, rarely participating as speakers.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, there was a notable absence of messages targeting women and national minority groups from contestants' campaigns.

Prime Minister Pashinyan used his working visits to the regions during the pre-campaign period to promote his electoral messages in meetings with local communities and to visit local offices of his party. While these events were not labelled as campaign events, they featured campaign messages and materials such as banners with the Civil Contract logo.<sup>49</sup> The Electoral Code restricts campaigning by civil servants and government officials to off-duty hours but does not clearly define working or non-working hours.<sup>50</sup> Visits to party offices in the course of a working visit by a state official, or to government offices during the campaign period, blur the line between the ruling party

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<sup>45</sup> As an example, Mr. Pashinyan was portrayed as an ally of the president of Azerbaijan, and the modified logo of his party was shown containing a flag of that country.

<sup>46</sup> However, on 16 June on the sidelines of a Civil Contract rally in Yeghegnadzor, ODIHR EOM observers witnessed the forceful arrest of five Armenia Alliance supporters by the police. The five were later released, but one showed evidence of having been physically harmed. This individual complained to court about his mistreatment. The same individual found his car set on fire on 11 July.

<sup>47</sup> There were cases of vandalism of campaign material, including two cases reported by the With Honor alliance in Yerevan and in Aragatsotn region, but many contestants did not file official complaints with the police or the CEC, citing lack of trust in effective remedy and lack of time. However, by 19 June the General Prosecutor's Office had received 42 reports of property damage relating to election material, but only opened criminal cases in 8. While not official campaign materials, ODIHR EOM observers reported vandalized billboards promoting Mr. Kocharyan's book in the regions of Lori, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor. Billboards promoting the charity of the head of the Democratic Party, the Tigran Arzakantsyan Foundation, were defaced in Lori region.

<sup>48</sup> Only 24 out of 153 observed speakers during rallies were women (16 per cent), and 51 out of 73 observed campaign events (70 per cent) featured no female speaker.

<sup>49</sup> For example, party banners observed by ODIHR EOM long-term observers in Vanadzor (Lori region) on 30 May and as well as more than 20 other events portrayed on the [candidate's Facebook page](#).

<sup>50</sup> Acting Prime Minister Pashinyan took official leave between 7 and 18 June, as did government ministers, regional governors and other state officials involved in the campaign.



and the state, which is not in line with OSCE commitments.<sup>51</sup> Allegations of misuse of administrative resources also persisted throughout the campaign and were not sufficiently or uniformly addressed.<sup>52</sup>

*Laws and regulations regarding the misuse of administrative resources should be further elaborated, credible reports should be properly investigated and adequate, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions should be introduced.*

The ODIHR EOM observed incidents of pressure on private and public sector employees by employers connected to the main contestants to attend campaign events.<sup>53</sup> Against the background of the aggravated economic situation and past experience regarding pressure and layoffs, ODIHR EOM observers noted a widespread reluctance to bring forward specific cases.<sup>54</sup> A number of allegations of vote buying were also made to the ODIHR EOM, in particular in regard to larger parties and authorities opened investigations against six opposition candidates on vote-buying charges, five of which occurred during the campaign period and through to election day.<sup>55</sup>

*Robust efforts are needed to address vote-buying and pressure on voters, both through civic awareness campaigns, thorough investigations and prosecutions, in order to promote confidence in the electoral process. To ensure that cases of pressure and vote buying are reported, already available anonymous reporting options should be unified and implemented as a separate mechanism by a trusted entity. Furthermore, adequate sanctions against pressure on voters and vote buying should be further defined by law.*

## IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign financing is primarily regulated by the Electoral Code and the Law on Political Parties.<sup>56</sup> Political parties or alliances that received at least three per cent of the vote in the previous elections are entitled to annual public funding; there is no direct public funding of election campaigns.<sup>57</sup> Parties and alliances contesting the elections are required to open a dedicated bank account for campaign-

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<sup>51</sup> Paragraph 5.4 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that there should be “a clear separation between the State and political parties; in particular, political parties will not be merged with the State”.

<sup>52</sup> See ODIHR and Venice Commission [Joint Guidelines for Preventing and Responding to the Misuse of Administrative Resources During Electoral Processes](#). ODIHR EOM observers received reports of salary raises, use of official cars or buildings for campaigning from 4 of the 10 regions and Yerevan.

<sup>53</sup> One Armenia Alliance candidate was arrested after charges of pressuring subordinated staff were raised against him. He was freed because conditions of his arrest were deemed unlawful. He subsequently left the country and is wanted with a new warrant on the same charges.

<sup>54</sup> ODIHR EOM observer reports from 8 of the 10 regions and Yerevan suggest the practice of pressure on staff in favor of different parties or alliances.

<sup>55</sup> On 8 June, a Prosperous Armenia candidate was arrested on charges of vote buying in the Gegharkunik region. On 11 June, the former Mayor of Armavir, standing as a With Honor candidate, was also arrested in the Armavir region. On 18 June, a With Honor candidate was arrested on vote buying charges in the Zeytun district in Yerevan. In addition to the three candidates arrested, investigations were initiated in 14 cases of suspected vote buying before election day and, as a consequence, two more With Honor alliance candidates were taken into preventive detention on similar charges. On 12 July, the Human Rights Defender [reported](#) that his office had received complaints that law enforcement bodies were pressuring citizens to testify against an Armenia Alliance candidate and several heads of communities in Syunik region in a case of alleged vote buying.

<sup>56</sup> The Law on Political Parties was amended in December 2020, *inter alia* with respect to party and campaign financing. Together with the May 2021 changes to the Electoral Code, amended provisions addressed some previously noted concerns, as they expanded the definition of campaign expenditures and transferred the financial oversight functions from the CEC to the Anti-Corruption Commission. Most of these amendments enter into legal force in 2022.

<sup>57</sup> Based on the results of the 2018 parliamentary elections, the following parties and alliances receive funding from the state budget: My Step, Prosperous Armenia, Bright Armenia, Republican Party of Armenia, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

finance transactions.<sup>58</sup> Campaigns may be funded by donations from voters, as well as from candidates' own contributions and funds transferred by political parties.<sup>59</sup> Campaign contributions from commercial and non-commercial entities, as well as from foreign and anonymous sources, are not permitted. Any contribution from prohibited sources and contributions that exceed the limits are transferred to the state budget. The law limits campaign expenses to 500 million Armenian dram (AMD) per contesting party or alliance.

While campaign finance regulation is detailed, a number of shortcomings allow for the circumvention of the legal provisions. In particular, despite a longstanding ODIHR recommendation, the legal definition of campaign expenditures does not cover organizational expenses, such as costs for office space, transportation, communications, and campaign staff, leaving the opportunity for contestants to use these expenses as a means to circumvent spending limits. The ODIHR EOM observed that some parties used charitable organizations and personal publicity to bypass campaign spending limits.<sup>60</sup> While the amended law on Political Parties banned contributions from commercial entities to party funds and introduced corresponding sanctions, some ODIHR interlocutors stated that the ban can be circumvented by channeling large corporate donations through individual citizens as smaller contributions to campaign funds. While new sanctions were introduced in recent amendments to the legal framework, some of the most necessary amendments addressing criminal and administrative liability for violations of campaign financing rules will only become applicable in 2022.

For these elections, the CEC's Oversight and Audit Service (OAS) was in charge of overseeing the compliance of contesting parties and alliances with campaign finance legislation. The OAS was responsible for verifying whether contributions and expenses were within the legal limits. It informed the ODIHR EOM that candidates' contributions that exceeded the legal limit were forfeited to the state budget, as required by law. The OAS also informed the ODIHR EOM that it cross-checked information presented by contesting parties and alliances against the data submitted by the Central Bank and the Commission for Television and Radio.<sup>61</sup> However, other significant expenditures such as costs for billboards and printed campaign materials are not routinely verified. The OAS further informed the ODIHR EOM that in these cases, the oversight is to be performed on the basis of complaints, but that no such complaints were received in the course of these elections.

*As previously recommended by ODIHR, the legal framework should be amended to provide for accounting and reporting of all campaign-related expenditures and contributions, including organizational expenditures and those incurred before the official campaign period, and the institutions responsible for campaign finance oversight should be sufficiently resourced for their duties.*

The OAS published summarized data on the total amounts of contributions and expenditures per contesting party and alliance and posted their pre-election and post-election financial reports online, thereby contributing to financial transparency. All contesting parties and alliances complied with the deadlines for submitting financial reports. Most expenditures were made for campaign advertising

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<sup>58</sup> Non-establishment of the campaign fund constitutes grounds for the CEC to apply to the Administrative Court for revocation of the registration of a contestant.

<sup>59</sup> By law, contributions are limited to AMD 500,000 for voters; AMD 5 million for candidates, and AMD 100 million for contesting parties and alliances.

<sup>60</sup> The Tigran Arzakantsyan Foundation was perceived as increasing the visibility for the Democratic Party, in particular in Yerevan and in Tavush region. ODIHR EOM observers also reported the use of the foundation's premises by the Democratic Party in Aragatsotn region. Billboards promoting a book by former President Kocharyan were observed by the ODIHR EOM in all regions. This widespread publicity increased visibility for Mr. Kocharyan but did not hinder the ability of other participants to place their paid billboards in places allocated by the CEC.

<sup>61</sup> Expenses by contestants related to advertisements on social networks were not reported, and the OAS acknowledged that they had no means of oversight over such expenditures.

and printed electoral materials. None of the contestants reported expenses in excess of the legal spending limits. Some parties included rent payments for their regional offices as a part of campaign expenditures.<sup>62</sup> Given the short duration of the election campaign and the deadlines for campaign reporting, there was little change in financial movements between the interim and the final reports.<sup>63</sup>

## X. MEDIA

### A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The media landscape is diverse and includes 50 broadcasters, including 6 TV channels and 4 radio stations with nationwide outreach, over 35 periodical print publications, and more than 200 online news portals.<sup>64</sup> The role of online sources and social networks, in particular Facebook, is growing rapidly, and they have become significant platforms for the exchange of election-related information. Nevertheless, television remains the most important source of political information, especially outside the capital. Public television, financed from the state budget and through advertisement, continues to be perceived as having a pro-government editorial policy. At the same time, ODIHR EOM interlocutors highlighted the long-standing political affiliation of various private broadcasters. While the legislation does not allow for political ownership, the existing practice where financial sources from political parties or politicians are channeled through various methods is perceived as a *de facto* accepted status quo for ensuring political diversity within the television environment.<sup>65</sup>

*To ensure full transparency of media ownership, legislative measures should be taken to provide that all information on ownership of media outlets is publicly disclosed, and disclosure should be legally enforceable.*

Freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution, and international organizations have noted overall improvements in this respect since 2018. Defamation was decriminalized in 2010, but a Civil Code amendment from April 2021 tripled the maximum pecuniary damages that can be claimed in insult and libel cases.<sup>66</sup> ODIHR EOM interlocutors highlighted the growing level of harsh, intolerant and inflammatory rhetoric in the political arena. The political environment in which different opinions are routinely confronted with hatred and reprimand, particularly on social networks, is negatively affecting public discourse.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, the number of recent instances of physical harassment of journalists performing their professional duties raises questions about respect for media freedom.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Although such expenditures are not covered by the reporting requirements, the OAS explained that contestants declare them as campaign expenditures when the overall amount of expenses does not exceed the legal limits.

<sup>63</sup> The interim reports were submitted on 16 June, ten days after the beginning of the election campaign, which in these elections was four days before election day. Therefore, the final reports only added campaign expenditures incurred during a few days.

<sup>64</sup> The Commission for Television and Radio (CTR) provided the number of broadcasters, whereas the numbers of print and online media are reported by the [IREX Media Sustainability Index 2019 – Armenia](#).

<sup>65</sup> Art. 15 (2) enumerates categories of subjects and persons that may not be founders or shareholders of private broadcasters. It includes, *inter alia*, deputies of the National Assembly and affiliated persons, political parties, members of their governing bodies and affiliated persons, or foundations of political parties. Broadcasters are obliged to disclose their founders and shareholders; however, there is no sanction for not complying with this requirement, nor any other legal mechanism to enforce it.

<sup>66</sup> See the [statement](#) by ten local media and human rights organizations, in which they criticized the amendment. The president sent the amendment to the Constitutional Court for review. Its decision is pending, with the session postponed to October.

<sup>67</sup> On 14 April, Armenian [media CSOs condemned](#) threats and insults on journalists.

<sup>68</sup> Reports of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression from [23 April](#) and of the Union of Journalists of Armenia from [11 May](#), [31 May](#), and [3 June](#) refer to obstruction and physical harassment of journalists from ArmNews TV/tert.am website, Channel 5, 168.am website and *Hraparak* newspaper.

## B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

On 1 June, in line with the law, the CEC, through a public lottery, allocated 30 minutes of free airtime on public television, and 60 minutes on public radio, both during prime time, to each contesting party or alliance. In addition, each contesting party or alliance had the right to purchase up to 60 minutes of airtime on public television, and up to 90 minutes on public radio. Thirty-two private broadcasters, including 26 regional broadcasters, provided contestants with an opportunity to buy paid advertisements.<sup>69</sup>

By law, the Commission for Television and Radio (CTR) oversees all broadcasters during the official campaign period, including through its own media monitoring.<sup>70</sup> Similarly to 2018, in a welcome step, the CTR interpreted the requirement in the Electoral Code placed on all broadcasters to provide “impartial and non-judgmental information” in a manner that allowed for a more comprehensive coverage of contestants, rather than a formalistic emphasis on equal amounts of coverage to each contestant.<sup>71</sup> In compliance with the legislation, the regulator issued one pre-election monitoring report and a final monitoring report.<sup>72</sup> The CTR stated that some TV and radio companies disproportionately allocated the airtime in favour of certain parties and alliances, but it did not consider these recorded disproportions as violations of the requirement to ensure equal conditions.<sup>73</sup>

*Consideration could be given to enhancing the capacity of the Commission for Television and Radio to conduct media monitoring of political coverage thoroughly and independently, including during the periods between elections. The Commission should exercise its legal right to conduct such monitoring regularly, to ensure diversity of political programming.*

The CTR replied by official letters to two formal complaints from the Armenian Alliance and the With Honor alliance, though these are not publicly available. While filed during the official campaign period (on 8 and 9 June, respectively), both letters concerned editions of the political programme ‘Interview with Petros Ghazaryan’ aired by the public television *HI* prior to the official campaign. On 1 July, the CTR in a session considered six recorded cases of violations of the campaign silence, with all broadcasters in question sanctioned by warning.<sup>74</sup>

## C. ODIHR EOM MEDIA MONITORING [Click Here to Read Media Monitoring Results](#)



The ODIHR EOM commenced its media monitoring on 24 May, with quantitative and qualitative analysis of seven TV channels, one radio station, and three online media outlets.<sup>75</sup> There were

<sup>69</sup> Political subjects can place political advertising in private media (both broadcast and print), including before the official campaign period.

<sup>70</sup> Based on its own methodology, publicly available on its [website](#) as well as on the [CEC website](#), the CTR monitored a total of 38 broadcasters. While predominantly focused on compliance with requirements concerning free and paid airtime, it also monitored time provided to the contesting subjects in the news as well as in other political programmes. However, it did not assess the tone of the coverage.

<sup>71</sup> There are no such requirements for political programmes aired by private broadcasters outside the official campaign period.

<sup>72</sup> Monitoring reports were issued on 16 and 25 June. Both are available at the websites of [the CTR](#) and [the CEC](#).

<sup>73</sup> In case of violations, the CTR can issue warnings or apply fines to private broadcasters (Art. 55 of the 2020 Law on Audiovisual Media). It can order the public broadcasters to eliminate detected shortcomings; it can also file a motion to the Council of a public broadcaster for stricter measures against the CEO of the respective public broadcaster (Art. 32).

<sup>74</sup> Most cases were related to visibility of posters of political contestants during the broadcasting.

<sup>75</sup> The ODIHR EOM monitored the prime-time broadcasts of the nationwide TV channels *HI* (public TV), *Armenia TV*, *Kentron TV*, *Shant TV*, and *Yerkir Media*, as well as Yerevan-based *Armnews TV*. It also monitored the main evening news programmes of *ATV* and *Channel 5* (during the official campaign). The ODIHR EOM also monitored the news programs of public radio and politically relevant articles of the online media sources [www.azatutyun.am](#) (the Armenian-language service of RFE/RL), [www.news.am](#), and [www.lin.am](#).

discernible differences in the media coverage of political developments before and after the start of the official campaign. Monitored broadcasters, in particular public television, decreased their coverage of the current government and the acting prime minister, and dedicated their coverage during the campaign period mostly to contesting parties and alliances. A significant portion of the television content related to elections was campaign adverts, including frequent negative campaigning, primarily by Armenia Alliance.<sup>76</sup>

The share of coverage dedicated to the government on public broadcaster *HI* decreased from 66 per cent before the campaign period to 4 per cent during the campaign, remaining overwhelmingly positive or neutral in tone. *HI* covered all contestants to a generally comparable extent, providing the largest amount of coverage to Civil Contract with 12 per cent, followed by the Armenian National Congress with 11 per cent, Armenia Alliance with 8 per cent, and With Honor alliance with 7 per cent. The coverage was mostly positive and neutral in tone, and generally avoided harsh rhetoric.

Public television adhered to the legal requirements for allocation of free and paid airtime.<sup>77</sup> It also aired numerous interviews<sup>78</sup> and electoral debates, including two live debates with the leaders of contesting parties and alliances.<sup>79</sup> However, the leaders of more than half of the contesting parties and alliances declined to participate in the final two debates on public television, which negatively affected these debates' informational value.<sup>80</sup> Several opposition parties complained about various aspects of *HI*'s election coverage, including the editing and rejection of paid advertising materials which were critical of the ruling party and its supporters,<sup>81</sup> and the means for determining the debate order.<sup>82</sup>

*The editorial independence of the public media and citizens' access to impartial, critical and analytical political programmes should be further strengthened. In this respect, extending requirements for impartial election coverage by public media during the complete election cycle*

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<sup>76</sup> Some Armenia Alliance advertisements included distorted parts of a video, created in 2018 by popular political blogger Vilen Gaifejian in which he criticized the former government, and which was originally used in Civil Contract advertisements during the campaign. The Armenia Alliance used a fragment of the original video, and edited it in such a way that it presented a different political message, against the current government. The blogger complained to the TV channels, claiming that the editing violated his copyrights.

<sup>77</sup> All 25 contesting parties and alliances used free airtime on public television, and 13 on public radio. In addition, 20 placed paid political advertisements on public television, and 6 on public radio.

<sup>78</sup> The main political debate programme of *HI*, 'Interview with Petros Ghazaryan,' was complemented with another interview programme to present representatives of all contesting parties and alliances, hosting 22 of them (Armenia Alliance and With Honor alliance rejected the invitation). However, between the call of the elections on 10 May and the beginning of the official campaign period on 7 June, representatives of Civil Contract participated in almost 50 per cent of editions of 'Interview with Petros Ghazaryan' (eight times). Representatives of five other parties were invited to nine editions, but none of them more than two times.

<sup>79</sup> *Azatutyun.am*, several regional and online media (*Factor TV*, *Kyavar TV*, *Lori TV*, *Sevan TV* and *Tsayg TV*) and CSOs (Media Center and Dialogue Media Center) also organized debates.

<sup>80</sup> The main opposition leaders rejected the opportunity to debate with the incumbent, stating that they see him as a traitor of the country.

<sup>81</sup> Armenia Alliance (on 8 June) and With Honor (on 9 June) filed complaints with the CTR, alleging biased moderation by the host of the main political debate aired by public television. On 12 June, the With Honor alliance publicly complained about two instances of editorial interference in its advertising materials due to alleged defamatory language. On 14 June, the CTR advised television channels that such editing was not permissible, and on 17 June, the public television rectified its rejection of one spot and provided the party with an alternative slot.

<sup>82</sup> Several parties protested the selection criteria for the final televised debates, and 13 chose not to participate. The debates, aired on 16 and 17 June, grouped together parties and alliances based on the date of party registration, as a result of which these parties claimed to have been deprived of the opportunity to pose questions to the ruling party. On 18 June the Administrative Court dismissed the complaint filed by the Armenian National Congress on 17 June concerning the selection criteria for the leaders' debate, on the grounds that the application does not fall within the scope of the court's jurisdiction.

*could be considered. This also includes non-preferential reporting on the activities of public and state officials outside official campaign periods.*

During the official campaign, some private broadcasters, particularly *Shant TV*, made an observable effort to cover most electoral contestants in a largely impartial manner, contributing to the diversity of information available and to the voters' ability to make an informed choice. The channel dedicated 11 per cent of its politics-related coverage to the Armenia Alliance and 10 per cent to Civil Contract. The tone of the coverage was neutral or positive. By contrast, news channel *Armnews* often presented one-sided and biased coverage against the ruling authorities and Civil Contract, including derogatory statements made by its journalists.

Channels that are perceived to be openly affiliated with particular parties gave those contestants preferential treatment. For example, *Yerkir Media* dedicated 36 per cent of its coverage, which was mostly positive or neutral in tone, to the Armenia Alliance. Similarly, *Channel 5* dedicated 36 per cent of its coverage, in a mostly positive or neutral tone, to the Armenia Alliance, while often presenting one-sided and negative coverage about the government, represented by Civil Contract.

The monitored online media presented different editorial policies, with *lin.am* critical towards the opposition, in particular Armenia Alliance, while *news.am* showed an overwhelmingly negative portrayal of Civil Contract. *Azatutyun.am*, on the other hand, offered its readers balanced campaign coverage in terms of time, but it dedicated slightly more positive coverage to the ruling Civil Contract.

## XI. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Under the Electoral Code, decisions, actions, and inactions of election commissions can be appealed to the corresponding next higher-level commission, while complaints against the CEC are adjudicated by the Administrative Court.<sup>83</sup> By law, appeals against decisions and actions of election commissions can also be filed with courts, and in cases of parallel judicial and administrative appeals, the judicial process takes precedence. According to the Administrative Court, applicants must exhaust all remedies within the election administration before submitting appeals to the court.<sup>84</sup> With some exceptions, legal standing for filing complaints and appeals is limited to potential violations of personal electoral rights.<sup>85</sup> In April 2021, an observation organization challenged the constitutionality of the provision of the Electoral Code that does not allow for the filing of complaints in the public interest. The complaint was dismissed by the Constitutional Court on 2 September.<sup>86</sup> The law provides for several levels of appeals against voting results, although the right to appeal is limited to political parties and alliances contesting the elections and candidates included in their lists.<sup>87</sup> They can further appeal a TEC decision to the CEC or the Administrative Court.

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<sup>83</sup> Complaints regarding inaccuracies in the voter lists can be filed to the PVD, its decisions can be further appealed to a district court.

<sup>84</sup> In practice, this means that only appeals against CEC decisions are admissible for judicial review. This does not, however, concern appeals against TEC decisions on voting results.

<sup>85</sup> Complaints may be filed by voters, media representatives, and observers with respect to violations of their individual rights, and by proxies and commission members with respect to violations of their rights and those of other parties, candidates, and stakeholders.

<sup>86</sup> Provisions of the Electoral Code on legal standing only allow observers to submit complaints with regard to violations of their rights.

<sup>87</sup> PEC members and proxies can also challenge PEC-level results. Proxies can do so only if they were present during voting and the vote count, and PEC members if they made written comments in the PEC protocols. Section II.3.3f of the Venice Commission [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) recommends that "All candidates and voters registered in the constituency concerned must be entitled to appeal. A reasonable quorum may be imposed for appeals by voters on the results of elections."

The CEC received 22 complaints before election day, as well as a number of informal applications and requests for information.<sup>88</sup> Discussions on complaints at the CEC were open and collegial, and all participants had the opportunity to express their views, and decisions were posted in keeping with official deadlines. Many applicants alleged campaign violations based on the use of harsh rhetoric and what they considered “hate speech” and demanded the annulment of the registration of some candidate lists and individual candidates. While most of these complaints were dismissed due to lack of legal standing, the CEC emphasized the right to freedom of expression and judged that the Electoral Code does not authorize it to evaluate the content of campaign speeches, nor does it provide criteria for such an evaluation. Following an appeal, the Administrative Court declared the CEC’s inaction over campaign speeches of candidate Nikol Pashinyan as illegal; however, it did not elaborate on the grounds in the election legislation which the CEC ought to have used for evaluating the legality of campaign speeches.<sup>89</sup>

Of the complaints received by the CEC before election day, four alleged the misuse of administrative resources.<sup>90</sup> These were dismissed on the grounds of the complainants’ lack of legal standing, and the substance of the complaints was not uniformly evaluated, despite the CEC’s legal obligation to do so.<sup>91</sup> The CEC explained to the ODIHR EOM that it refrained from evaluating alleged misuse of administrative resources when complaints on similar subjects were filed with the Prosecutor General’s Office.<sup>92</sup> This approach leaves violations related to the misuse of administrative resources in the campaign without timely remedy during the electoral process.<sup>93</sup> In order to facilitate access for complainants during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CEC allowed for complaints and letters to also be submitted via an electronic system.<sup>94</sup>

*In line with the Electoral Code and in order to ensure a level playing field during the election campaign, the CEC should consider alleged cases of misuse of administrative resources in the election campaign as falling within its competences and, when necessary, apply electoral and administrative sanctions such as warnings and fines.*

The Administrative Court received 21 appeals before election day, including appeals from potential candidates who were refused the residency or citizenship certificates required for candidate registration, and appeals against the CEC decisions to cancel the registration of three candidates.<sup>95</sup> In one case, the Administrative Court overturned the CEC decisions to remove billboards promoting a book by former President Kocharyan, which the CEC found to be “associated with the campaign.”<sup>96</sup> Three other contestants submitted their appeals against similar CEC decisions to remove their

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<sup>88</sup> The CEC reported that overall, it received 85 different applications. This number includes candidate withdrawal requests and requests for information submitted by citizens and election observers.

<sup>89</sup> The judgment was issued five days after election day.

<sup>90</sup> The CEC was also informed of related concerns in the form of grievances that were not submitted as formal complaints.

<sup>91</sup> According to the Electoral Code, electoral commissions shall exercise control over the observance of procedures for campaigning with the power to act *ex officio*. Article 23 of the Electoral Code establishes restrictions for the election campaign, including the prohibition of the use of administrative resources. In one case, the CEC inaction was appealed, and the Administrative Court established misuse of administrative resources in the election campaign of Civil Contract.

<sup>92</sup> Misuse of administrative resources is not a criminal offence as such; at the same time, it is an aggravating circumstance for some criminal offences.

<sup>93</sup> All investigations on criminal offences were ongoing as of election day.

<sup>94</sup> The CEC piloted the electronic system for submitting complaints during the 2020 local elections.

<sup>95</sup> The Administrative Court upheld the CEC decision in two cases, and in one case the candidate was reinstated on the list.

<sup>96</sup> On 6 June, the Court held that the CEC did not explain why it found the billboards to be “associated with the campaign.” Neither the Electoral Code nor a sub-legal act provides a definition of ‘campaign.’ On 7 June, the CEC adopted the same decision again, this time with a detailed reasoning. Nevertheless, the Court overturned it again, stating that the CEC could not re-adopt the decision which contradicted a final ruling of the Administrative Court.

billboards outside of the legal deadline for these appeals.<sup>97</sup> The court hearings observed by the ODIHR EOM were held in a transparent manner in open sessions, and participants were duly informed about the time and place of the hearings and were provided with opportunities to present their arguments to the court.

The Code of Administrative Procedures requires the Administrative Court to decide on election-related appeals within seven days. In several cases before election day, the Administrative Court took into account the electoral deadlines, issuing the judgments within a shorter timeframe to provide a timely redress.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, neither the Code of Administrative Procedures nor the Electoral Code provide for all pre-election appeals to be resolved by election day, which may affect the effectiveness of remedies provided.<sup>99</sup> Three campaign-related CEC decisions were overruled by the Administrative Court more than three days after election day, by which time the implementation of these judgements was no longer relevant for these elections.<sup>100</sup>

*The legal deadlines for consideration of pre-election appeals should be adjusted in line with election deadlines in order to guarantee timely implementation of judgments and effective remedies against electoral violations.*

The Administrative Court was not always consistent in its interpretation of the electoral law. While in one decision the court refused to evaluate the content of alleged campaign materials, such as billboards, due to the lack of a legal definition of election campaign, in another case the court made such an evaluation, referring to the amendments to the Electoral Code that were not yet in force for these elections.<sup>101</sup> These inconsistencies detracted from legal certainty and consistent implementation of the law.

*The courts and other adjudicating bodies should implement the laws, including the Electoral Code, in a uniform and consistent manner. Trainings and the sharing of practices should be introduced to this effect.*

Overall, the Prosecutor General's Office received 861 reports alleging electoral violations before election day, 371 of which were sent to preliminary investigation while those of an administrative nature were referred to the CEC. The Prosecutor General's Office reported that overall, 78 criminal cases relating to these elections had been initiated, including 33 cases of suspected vote buying. Eighty-six people were charged, of whom 24 were detained. The total of candidates that were arrested on different election-related charges rose to eight in the aftermath of the elections – six for vote buying, one for pressure on employees, and one for violence in the vicinity of a polling station.<sup>102</sup>

Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about the judiciary being political on the one hand, and about interference with judicial independence on the other. In 2020, while politically sensitive

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<sup>97</sup> The CEC adopted decisions to remove the billboards of Bright Armenia, 5164 Movement, and candidate Tigran Arzakantsayn on 31 May. The Electoral Code stipulates that appeals are to be filed within three days from the moment of a potential rights violation.

<sup>98</sup> Cases related to cancellation of registration of candidates were considered within the timeframes that would allow to meet the start of the electoral campaign for candidates and the deadline of printing ballots for the CEC. Ballot papers contain the names of the first three candidates on the respective candidate list.

<sup>99</sup> Despite the pre-election subject matter of appeals, the legislation links the final handling of all appeals with the deadline for summarization of the election results by the CEC.

<sup>100</sup> The appeals were submitted with regard to the CEC decision to issue a warning to candidate Pashinyan for violation of the campaign silence, the CEC decision to decline to take actions and evaluate campaign speeches of candidate Pashinyan, and a CEC decision related to the misuse of administrative resources in the campaign.

<sup>101</sup> The Court found no characteristics of campaigning in the speech of candidate Pashinyan on the day of the campaign silence and invalidated the CEC warning.

<sup>102</sup> The General Prosecutor's office published [information containing this data on 23 July](#).



cases were pending before the Constitutional Court,<sup>103</sup> parliament adopted amendments to transitional provisions of the Constitution relating to the terms of office of Constitutional Court judges, which resulted in significant changes to the current composition of the Constitutional Court.<sup>104</sup>

## XII. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS

The legal framework provides for international and citizen election observation and also entitles proxies of parties and alliances contesting an election to be present in polling stations. To be accredited, citizen observer groups must not support candidates or political parties, are required to adopt an internal code of conduct for their observers and are responsible for training their observers. Despite prior ODIHR recommendations that this requirement be removed, the Electoral Code requires citizen observer groups to include an explicit reference to democracy and human rights protection in their charter for at least one year prior to the announcement of an election, thereby placing an unnecessary restriction on the opportunity to observe.<sup>105</sup>

*As previously recommended, the provision disqualifying newly created organizations from being accredited as observers should be reconsidered.*

Some citizen observer groups expressed concerns that the legal deadline for submitting applications for accreditation, 15 days before election day, made it difficult to recruit observers.<sup>106</sup> Applications for accreditation cannot be submitted electronically, which makes the process more burdensome for both citizen observer groups and the CEC.<sup>107</sup> The law does not provide for a renewed accreditation process in case of a second round.

Individual international organizations are allowed two observers and an interpreter per polling station, while citizen observer organizations are each allowed one observer at a time. Each accredited media organization and each registered party and alliance is allowed up to two representatives per polling station.<sup>108</sup> The law allows PECs to limit the number of citizen observers and media representatives inside polling stations to 15 if overcrowding negatively affects polling operations. While some ODIHR EOM interlocutors voiced concerns about the possible arbitrary application of this provision, it was not, in practice, an issue on election day.

By the 5 June legal deadline, the CEC accredited 19 citizen observer organizations with a total of 8,748 observers, 8 international organizations, as well as 70 members of diplomatic missions and foreign delegations. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors alleged that certain citizen observer organizations are closely affiliated with certain parties and candidates. Nine of the accredited citizen

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<sup>103</sup> Amendments changing the composition of the Constitutional Court were passed on 22 June 2020, the same day that the Constitutional Court met to schedule the session on the case relating to the constitutionality of charges brought against former President Kocharyan. On 26 March 2021, the Constitutional Court, under its new composition, declared the provision of the Criminal Code under which Mr. Kocharyan was charged as unconstitutional.

<sup>104</sup> Initially the government proposed bringing the changes to the constitutional provisions on the tenure of members of the constitutional court to a referendum which was scheduled for 5 April 2020. The referendum was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and amendments were made to the transitional provisions of the constitution which were passed in parliament. The Constitution does not foresee changes of its transitional provisions.

<sup>105</sup> On 29 May, the Resource Centre Charitable NGO was denied accreditation for not meeting this requirement.

<sup>106</sup> The May 2021 amendments to the Electoral Code, which will take effect in 2022, extend the period for registration of citizen observer organizations to 10 days before election day and allow for the submission of the list of individual observers up to 3 days before election day.

<sup>107</sup> The May 2021 amendments to the Electoral Code introduce electronic registration process for citizen observers.

<sup>108</sup> Accredited media groups are permitted one representative per polling station, or 2 for TV crews with a cameraman.

observer organizations did not publish any report, statement, or other information on their observation of the elections.<sup>109</sup>

### XIII. ELECTION DAY

Election day was generally peaceful, with a voter turnout of 49.4 per cent reported by the CEC. The CEC started posting detailed preliminary election results on its website, by polling station, in the early hours of 21 June.

The opening was positively assessed in all 128 polling stations at which it was observed. Established procedures were generally followed, but 12 of the polling stations observed opened with slight delays.

Voting was positively assessed in 98 per cent of the 1,216 polling stations observed. While IEOM observers characterized the process as smooth, transparent and well-organized, they reported problems such as interference by party or alliance proxies, and frequent overcrowding as well as a general disregard for COVID-19 protection measures.

In 3 per cent of polling stations observed, the ballot boxes were not properly sealed. IEOM observers noted there was no consistent procedure in place for the sealing of ballot boxes and that the serial numbers of the seals were not recorded. Campaign materials and activities were noted in the vicinity of 7 per cent of the polling stations observed by IEOM observers. Twenty-five instances of tension or unrest around polling stations observed were reported (2 per cent), as well as isolated indications of vote buying and pressure on voters. IEOM observers reported that 15 per cent of polling stations observed were overcrowded, in particular in Yerevan and other cities. In most cases, overcrowding negatively affected polling operations. Approximately 67 per cent of polling stations were not accessible for persons with physical disabilities, and in 32 per cent, the polling station layout was not suitable for such voters.

*Public authorities should, where possible, take into consideration enhanced access for persons with physical disabilities when selecting polling station premises. Authorities could also consider setting a minimum size of polling station to prevent overcrowding. Considerations could be given to involving TECs in the process of selecting suitable polling stations.*

Party and alliance proxies were present in 97 per cent of polling stations observed, and citizen observers in 77 per cent. IEOM observers noted the presence of unauthorized persons in 8 per cent of polling stations observed, mostly police who had not been invited into the voting room by the PEC chairperson. In 74 polling stations observed (6 per cent), persons other than PEC members interfered in or directed the process; 55 of these cases were by proxies. Official complaints were filed in 7 per cent of polling stations where voting was observed. Some 43 per cent of PECs observed by IEOM observers were chaired by women, and overall, 65 per cent of PEC members in polling station observed were women.<sup>110</sup>

IEOM observers reported no problems with the VADs, and voter identification procedures were almost universally adhered to. In 7 per cent of polling stations observed, one or more voters were turned away, mostly because they had come to the wrong polling station, could not be found on the voter list, or were unable to produce a valid ID. In 8 polling stations IEOM observers noted that voters without a valid ID were nevertheless allowed to vote. Voting procedures were respected, with a few exceptions where not all voter confirmation slips were stamped by the PEC or retained after voters cast their ballots. IEOM observers noted some problems with the secrecy of the vote, including not

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<sup>109</sup> Of these, 2 had no website, 2 had no Facebook page, and 3 had neither.

<sup>110</sup> The CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that women represented approximately 67 per cent of all PEC members.

all voters voting in secret (4 per cent of polling stations observed) or voters taking their unused ballots out of the voting booth (2 per cent). IEOM observers reported a limited number of cases of violations, such as group voting (3 per cent), proxy voting (1 per cent), or attempts to influence voters (less than 1 per cent). Isolated instances where voters were not handed a full set of ballots were reported, as was one case where a PEC member handed an envelope already containing a ballot to an elderly voter. Citizen observer groups reported that elderly voters were at times provided assistance to vote without having requested it. Similarly, the IEOM observed two cases of proxies assisting voters, and two cases of voters being refused the right to be assisted by family members.

*The CEC should enhance voter education on electoral procedures, including on assisted voting, the prevention of group voting, and the importance of ballot secrecy.*

The vote count was positively assessed in 94 of the 100 polling stations in which it was observed and characterized by a high level of transparency and a general adherence to established procedures. Party and alliance proxies and citizen observers were present at almost all counts observed. IEOM observers reported 10 cases of undue interference in the count, 9 of which were by proxies. IEOM observers reported only a few cases of PECs failing to follow basic reconciliation procedures before opening the ballot boxes. However, IEOM observers reported that in 20 of the 100 counts observed there were minor differences between the number of signatures on the voter list and the number of voter confirmation slips issued by the VAD. The majority of the PEC protocols received by IEOM observers contained minor discrepancies. Counting procedures were followed overall, and IEOM observers noted very few significant procedural errors or serious violations such as intimidation of PEC members (2 reports) or evidence of falsification of official election material (3 reports). The determination of ballot validity was reasonable and consistent in all but 4 and 1 counts, respectively. Persons other than PEC members participated in 14 counts, and in 4 polling stations, PEC members had pre-signed the results protocol. Twenty-one PECs observed had problems completing the results protocol. In four polling stations observed, the PEC did not post a copy of the protocol for public display.

The tabulation process was negatively assessed in 6 of the 32 TECs where it was observed. While tabulation procedures were mostly followed, with very few procedural omissions or violations reported, in many TECs, the handover process was poorly organized and there were frequent reports of insufficient space and overcrowding negatively affecting the process and transparency. As required by law, all TECs observed publicly posted aggregated intermediate results every three hours. IEOM observers reported no interference in the tabulation process. Unlike in PECs, proxies were only present in 13 TECs observed. The figures in 39 of the 68 PEC protocols collected and analyzed by the ODIHR EOM did not reconcile; these included 11 protocols which contained discrepancies in the number of votes cast for contestants, which were recorded during data entry at the TEC. This indicates that enhanced training of PEC and TEC members is needed.

*The CEC should enhance the trainings of lower-level election commission members with regard to the results protocols, with a special focus on the vote count and the completion of results protocols for PEC members, and on data entry for TEC members. Mandatory participation in CEC trainings should be considered, especially for PEC chairpersons and secretaries.*

On election day, the CEC registered 27 reports of violations, several of which were confirmed by the CEC. These included attempts to direct voters how to vote and cases of interference by proxies. The Prosecutor's Office reported that it had received 319 reports of violations during voting hours. Of these, 79 concerned obstruction of voting, 89 voting more than once or impersonation, 49 were for

violations of the secrecy of the vote, and 69 for vote-buying. Six criminal cases were initiated on election day itself.<sup>111</sup> In addition, the police reported that they received 87 reports.

#### XIV. POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

In accordance with the law, on 22 June the CEC announced and published the preliminary results disaggregated by polling station. A total of 83 recounts took place across 16 TECs from 22 to 25 June. Almost all TECs visited by the ODIHR EOM during the recount process were open and collaborative.<sup>112</sup> The recounts observed by the ODIHR EOM were conducted in a professional and transparent manner.<sup>113</sup> The list and results of all recounts were published by the CEC on its website on 29 June. Four recounts were formally requested by authorized entities.<sup>114</sup> While some recounts were performed upon request from citizen observer groups and from political parties, most were carried out upon the initiative of the TECs themselves, due to allegations of fraud or concerns over discrepancies in the PEC result protocols. These initiatives contributed to enhancing the level of trust in the election results. The majority of recounts identified either minor discrepancies or found no changes. Most corrections of election results were minor, with the exception of five polling stations.<sup>115</sup> The recounts did not impact the results of the elections. The final election results were announced and published by the CEC on 27 June, in line with the law.

The Administrative Court informed the ODIHR EOM that it had not received any appeals related to voting results. While the CEC received 18 complaints and applications after election day,<sup>116</sup> including four requests for recounts,<sup>117</sup> none of the applicants demanded the invalidation of voting results in specific polling stations. At the same time, the CEC received four complaints requesting that the overall results of the elections be declared invalid. One complaint was dismissed as it was submitted after the legal deadline, the other three complaints contained references to different violations that allegedly occurred during the electoral process. According to the applicants, all alleged violations taken together infringed on the exercise of equal and free suffrage. The CEC considered the complaints and stated that there had been no violations, during the preparations for elections and on election day, that could have impacted on the election results.

After election day, eight opposition parties and alliances declared that they did not accept the results but all of these refrained from calling their supporters to street protests.<sup>118</sup> With Honor additionally maintained that the detentions of four of their candidates on vote-buying charges did not follow procedures established by law, while Armenia Alliance alleged “200,000 suspicious votes.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> [One Verelq party candidate was taken into custody](#) following an altercation over the absence of a camera in a polling station, which resulted in the candidate’s son discharging a gas pistol.

<sup>112</sup> The chairperson of one TEC inaccurately told ODIHR EOM observers that no recount was taking place at that TEC.

<sup>113</sup> The chairperson of TEC 11 told ODIHR EOM observers repeatedly that no recount was taking place and later explained that he was not required to inform observers as no official application for a recount had been submitted.

<sup>114</sup> According to law, recounts can be requested by a PEC member who wrote a dissenting opinion on the PEC protocol or by a party whose proxy was present during the vote count.

<sup>115</sup> In the cases of the five polling stations, between 90 and 360 corrections in favor of either Armenia Alliance or With Honor Alliance were identified. According to the CEC, two complaints against PEC members were submitted to the General Prosecutor’s Office by 29 June. The law prohibits the selection as PEC members of persons who have been convicted of a criminal offense in relation to the electoral process.

<sup>116</sup> Most of the complaints were related to violations that took place in polling stations.

<sup>117</sup> Other recounts were initiated *ex-officio* or based on reports of citizen observers.

<sup>118</sup> [Armenia Alliance](#), [With Honor alliance](#), [Free Motherland alliance](#), [National Democratic Axis](#), [Democratic Party](#), [Hayots Hayrenik party](#), [Zartong party](#) and [5165 party](#) issued statements in this regard.

<sup>119</sup> Armenia Alliance head of the list Robert Kocharyan in a speech during a meeting of alliance members and affiliates on 29 June.

Only political parties and alliances contesting the elections can appeal the final election results to the Constitutional Court, which has 15 days from the submission of an application to decide. On 2 July, Armenia Alliance, With Honor alliance, Hayots Hayrenik (Motherland of Armenians) party, and Zartonq (Awakening) National Christian Party submitted appeals to the Constitutional Court challenging the CEC decision on the final election results.

All applicants alleged that the electoral process was distorted by different violations that affected the election results. Among the violations listed by the applicants were the alleged unconstitutionality of Mr. Pashinyan holding the prime-minister's office, the misuse of administrative resources and the use of inflammatory language in the campaign by the ruling party, inaccuracies in the voter lists, as well as election-day violations. On 17 July, the Constitutional Court rejected the appeals and left in force the CEC decision on the election results. The Constitutional Court established that some of the alleged violations took place during the electoral process and were confirmed by the responsible institutions and remedies provided where possible;<sup>120</sup> however, in the court's view such violations were isolated and could not affect the overall results of the elections. The court also noted that in many cases, breaches committed could not be attributed to a single political force.<sup>121</sup>

## **XV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations, as contained throughout the text, are offered with a view to enhance the conduct of elections in the Republic of Armenia 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 prior ODIHR recommendations, which remain to be addressed.<sup>122</sup> ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of Armenia to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

### **A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To ensure legal certainty, changes to the electoral legal framework should be made well in advance of elections, through an inclusive process. The timeframe between the adoption of legal changes and their implementation should allow for sufficient voter education and for electoral stakeholders to be able to familiarize themselves with the applicable rules.
2. All regulations and clarifications on electoral procedures, including ballot validity, the sealing of ballot boxes and the counting and tabulation of votes, including those cast by mobile voting, should be comprehensive, adopted in formal sessions of the CEC, and applied uniformly.
3. To ensure equal suffrage in accordance with international standards, restrictions to the right to vote based on mental disability should be removed.

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<sup>120</sup> The Administrative Court issued judgements on misuse of administrative resources and violations of election-campaign rules and several criminal cases were initiated by the General Prosecutor's Office.

<sup>121</sup> The Court noted that 'the practice of using an impermissibly low level and morally reprehensible expressions cannot be attributed to only one political force and was present in the public speeches of a number of contestants and their representatives, regrettably becoming a permanent component of the political discourse in Armenia.'

<sup>122</sup> According to paragraph 25 of the [1999 OSCE Istanbul Document](#), OSCE participating States committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations". The follow-up of prior recommendations is assessed by ODIHR as follows: Recommendation 17 from the final report on the 2018 early parliamentary elections is fully implemented. No recommendations from the final report on the 2018 early parliamentary elections are mostly implemented. The recommendations 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 14 from the final report on the 2018 early parliamentary elections are partly implemented. See also the [ODIHR Electoral Recommendations Database](#).

4. Laws and regulations regarding the misuse of administrative resources should be further elaborated, credible reports should be properly investigated and adequate, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions should be introduced.
5. Public officials, political parties, their candidates and supporters should refrain from using inflammatory rhetoric. Clearly defined non-criminal dissuasive measures should be introduced, while protecting freedom of speech.
6. The CEC should publish the schedule of TEC sessions, all TEC decisions, and the signed TEC protocols with results disaggregated by polling station, on its website in a systematic and timely manner. In addition, all information and documents of public interest, including preliminary results protocols and preliminary voter lists, should remain available online.
7. The editorial independence of the public media and citizens' access to impartial, critical and analytical political programmes should be further strengthened. In this respect, extending requirements for impartial election coverage by public media during the complete election cycle could be considered. This includes non-preferential reporting on the activities of public and state officials also outside official campaign periods.
8. In line with the Electoral Code and in order to ensure a level playing field during the election campaign, the CEC should consider alleged cases of misuse of administrative resources in the election campaign as falling within its competences and, when necessary, apply electoral and administrative sanctions such as warnings and fines.
9. Robust efforts are needed to address vote-buying and pressure on voters, both through civic awareness campaigns, and through investigations and prosecutions, in order to promote confidence in the electoral process. To ensure that cases of pressure and vote buying are reported, already available anonymous reporting options should be unified and implemented as a separate mechanism by a trusted entity. Furthermore, adequate sanctions against pressure on voters and vote buying should be further defined by law.
10. The PVD should publish regular and detailed information on the type and number of updates and corrections performed, including about newly added and deceased voters.

## **B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Election Administration**

11. Consideration should be given to introducing measures which would enhance participation in the election process by persons with disabilities.
12. To enhance the integrity and professionalism of the election administration and of electoral operations, the CEC could consider prescribing minimum qualifying criteria for PEC chairpersons and secretaries and ensure that all party-nominated PEC members are sufficiently trained. Parliamentary groups and parties should consider giving priority to the most qualified candidates.
13. In line with international standards, national authorities such as the CEC and the PVD should provide gender-disaggregated data on the electoral process, including on registered voters on the preliminary and final voter lists, the composition of lower-level election commissions, the number of candidates per list, and voter turnout.

## **Voter Registration**

14. While ensuring meaningful access to the voter lists, consideration should be given to safeguarding voter data privacy and secrecy of participation in the vote, including through confidentiality measures.

## **Candidate Registration**

15. Restrictions on candidate rights for persons with more than one citizenship should be reconsidered, and related criminalization should be removed.

## **Campaign Finance**

16. As previously recommended by ODIHR, the legal framework should be amended to provide for accounting and reporting of all campaign-related expenditures and contributions, including organizational expenditures and those incurred before the official campaign period and the institutions responsible for campaign finance oversight should be sufficiently resourced for their duties.

## **Media**

17. To ensure full transparency of media ownership, legislative measures should be taken to provide that all information on ownership of media outlets is publicly disclosed, and disclosure should be legally enforceable.
18. Consideration could be given to enhancing the capacity of the Commission for Television and Radio to conduct media monitoring of political coverage thoroughly and independently, including during the periods between elections. The Commission should exercise its legal right to conduct such monitoring regularly, to ensure diversity within political programming.

## **Complaints and Appeals**

19. The legal deadlines for consideration of pre-election appeals should be adjusted in line with election deadlines in order to guarantee timely implementation of judgments and effective remedies against electoral violations.
20. The courts and other adjudicating bodies should implement the laws, including the Electoral Code, in a uniform and consistent manner. Trainings and the sharing of practices should be introduced to this effect.

## **Citizen and International Observers**

21. As previously recommended, the provision disqualifying newly created organizations from being accredited as observers should be reconsidered.

## **Election Day**

22. Public authorities should, where possible, take into consideration enhanced access for persons with physical disabilities when selecting polling station premises. Authorities could also consider setting a minimum size of polling station to prevent overcrowding. Considerations could be given to involving TECs in the process of selecting suitable polling stations.

23. The CEC should enhance voter education on electoral procedures, including on assisted voting, the prevention of group voting, and the importance of ballot secrecy.
  
24. The CEC should enhance the trainings of lower-level election commission members with regard to the results protocols, with a special focus on the vote count and the completion of results protocols for PEC members, and on data entry for TEC members. Mandatory participation in CEC trainings should be considered, especially for PEC chairpersons and secretaries.



**ANNEX I – ELECTION RESULTS**

Total number of registered voters	2,595,512
Total number of voters who participated	1,281,997
<i>Voter turnout</i>	49.4%
Number of invalid votes	4,593
Number of votes cast through mobile voting	2,451
Number of votes cast from abroad electronically	500

Party/Alliance	Number of votes received	Percentage of valid votes cast	Direct seats	Minority seats	Compensatory Seats	Total seats	Percentage of seats
Civil Contract Party	688,761	53.9%	68	3		71	66%
Armenia Alliance	269,481	21.1%	26	1	2	29	27%
With Honor Alliance	66,650	5.2%	7			7	7%
Prosperous Armenia Party	50,444	4.0%					
Republic Party	38,758	3.0%					
Armenian National Congress Party	19,691	1.5%					
Shirinyan-Babajanyan Democrats' Union	19,212	1.5%					
National Democratic Axis Party	18,976	1.5%					
Bright Armenia Party	15,591	1.2%					
5165 National Conservative Movement Party	15,549	1.2%					
Liberal Party	14,936	1.2%					
Hayots Hayreniq (Homeland of Armenians) Party	13,130	1.0%					
Our Home Is Armenia Party	12,149	1.0%					
Democratic Party of Armenia	5,020	0.4%					
Zartonq (Awakening) National Christian Party	4,619	0.4%					
Free Motherland Alliance	4,119	0.3%					
Sovereign Armenia Party	3,915	0.3%					
Fair Armenia Party	3,914	0.3%					
Citizen's Decision Social Democratic Party	3,775	0.3%					
European Party of Armenia	2,440	0.2%					

Liberty (Azatutyun) Party	1,844	0.1%					
Verelk Party	1,233	0.1%					
Unified Homeland Party	964	0.1%					
Pan-Armenian National Statehood Party	803	0.1%					
National Agenda Party	719	0.1%					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,276,693</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	101	4	2	<b>107</b>	100%

Source: [CEC Results Protocol](#)

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

### OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Margareta Kari	Cederfelt	Special Co-ordinator	Sweden
Ditmir Elona	Henriksen	Head of Delegation	Norway
Harald Reinhold	Bushati		Albania
Katerina Jan	Hoxha		Albania
Jan Karla	Troch		Austria
Pavel Josef	Lopatka		Austria
Silvia Lars Aslan	Kosarikova		Czech Republic
Heljo Anti	Hornik		Czech Republic
Vilhelm Tom	Zaloudik		Czech Republic
Sereine Nikoloz	Marikova		Czech Republic
Tim Paul Viktor	Plzak		Czech Republic
Christoph Andreas	Hajek		Czech Republic
Daniela Jürgen	Andrisova		Czech Republic
Jürgen Luigi	Rasmussen		Denmark
Luigi Francesco	Pikhof		Estonia
Paolo Mauro	Poolamets		Estonia
Vito Paola	Junnila		Finland
Giuseppe Gumar	Packalen		Finland
Aurelijus Vilija	Mauborgne		France
Tomas Milda	Samkharadze		Georgia
Charles Romain	Knoblau		Germany
Robert Radoslaw	Podolay		Germany
Agnieszka Agnieszka	Neumann		Germany
	Schwarz		Germany
	De Ridder		Germany
	Martens		Germany
	Augussori		Italy
	Mollame		Italy
	Grimoldi		Italy
	Del Barba		Italy
	Vattuone		Italy
	Taverna		Italy
	Trezza		Italy
	Dyussebayev		Kazakhstan
	Veryga		Lithuania
	Targamadze		Lithuania
	Tomilinas		Lithuania
	Zviniene		Lithuania
	Margue		Luxembourg
	Kwiatkowski		Poland
	Fogiel		Poland
	Soin		Poland
	Pomaska		Poland

Dariusz	Rosati	Poland
Antonio	Maló De Abreu	Portugal
Alexandra	Tavares De Moura	Portugal
Gábor	Hajdu	Romania
Alexandru	Kocsis-Cristea	Romania
Costel Neculai	Dunava	Romania
Marius-Andrei	Miftode	Romania
Elena-Ruxandra	Cazacu	Romania
Lucian	Romascanu	Romania
Cătălin-Daniel	Fenechiu	Romania
Vadim	Dengin	Russian Federation
Maria	Zholobova	Russian Federation
Michele	Muratori	San Marino
Marta	Rosique Saltor	Spain
Fredrik	Svensson	Sweden
Simona	De Ciutiis	Sweden
Ardina	Gerkens	The Netherlands
Farah	Karimi	The Netherlands
Pavlo	Frolov	Ukraine
Vadym	Halaichuk	Ukraine
Volodymyr	Voronov	Ukraine
Yaroslav	Yurchyshyn	Ukraine
Janice	Helwig	United States
Stephanie	Koltchanov	France
Roberto	Montella	Italy
Freyja	Koci	Germany
Sophie	Jackson	Ireland
Roberto	Ferrari	Italy
Daria	Boyarskaya	Russian Federation

### Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Georgios	Katrougkalos	Head of Delegation	Greece
George-Louis	Bouchez		Belgium
Ivi-Triin	Odrats		Estonia
Gael	Martin-Micallef		France
Alexandra	Louis		France
Ulrich	Oehme		Germany
Franck	Heinrich		Germany
Christian	Petry		Germany
Bela	Bach		Germany
Richard	Barrett		Ireland
Francesco	Scoma		Italy
Catia	Polidori		Italy
Alberto	Ribolla		Italy
Arminas	Lydeka		Lithuania
Arkadiusz	Mularczyk		Poland
Paulo	Pisco		Portugal
Luis	Leite Ramos		Portugal

Bogdan	Torcatoriu	Romania
Gerardo	Giovagnoli	San Marino
Sibel	Arslan	Switzerland
Olivier	Francais	Switzerland

### ODIHR EOM Short-Term Observers

Radovan	Bouska	Czech Republic
Jan	Šotola	Czech Republic
Josef	Orisko	Czech Republic
Petr	Franc	Czech Republic
Petr	Piruncik	Czech Republic
Aneta	Subrtova	Czech Republic
Dan	Macek	Czech Republic
Pavel	Neuberg	Czech Republic
Olga	Nezmeskalova	Czech Republic
Jan	Plesinger	Czech Republic
Merete	Laubjerg	Denmark
Lise	Thorsen	Denmark
Silja	Kasman	Estonia
Kirsti	Narinen	Finland
Maiwenn	Ratinet	France
Emilie	Brückmann	France
Rémi	Pellerin	France
Arthur	Langlois	France
Virginie	Thiollet	France
Khalil	Zerargui	France
Damien	Hentry	France
Julien	Arnoult	France
Philippe	Dardant	France
Stephanie	Marsal	France
Zsuzsanna	Nagy	France
Hubert-Félix	Delattre	France
Clément	Mondamert-Chartron	France
Diane	Jeremic	France
Nadia	Yakhlaf-Lallemand	France
Véronique	Lasserre-Fy	France
Ambroise	Mazal	France
Thomas	Nadjar	France
Sabine	Ohayon	France
Vladimir	Bozhadze	Georgia
Kristina	Tolordava	Georgia
Gesa	Karrenbrock	Germany
Kim	Grundbacher	Germany
Stefan	Schneck	Germany
Maxim	Menschenin	Germany
Benedict	Göbel	Germany
Hildegard	Rogler-Mochel	Germany
Maria	Papamikhail	Greek

Riccardo	De Mutiis	Italy
Francesca	Chessa	Italy
Valeria	Aldighieri	Italy
Taiki	Kohno	Japan
Rika	Onodera	Japan
Galymzhan	Zhalmurzayev	Kazakhstan
Ulan	Murzaev	Kyrgyzstan
Kanyshai	Mamytova	Kyrgyzstan
Romante	Silyte	Lithuania
Jonas	Mensonas	Lithuania
Mindaugas	Nakvosas	Lithuania
Mindaugas	Genys	Lithuania
Egle	Mazele	Lithuania
Martynas	Barkauskas	Lithuania
Gabija	Lukšaitė	Lithuania
Indrė	Vileitė	Lithuania
Gediminas	Dapkevicius	Lithuania
Paulius	Narvydas	Lithuania
Ieva	Baubinaite	Lithuania
Mindaugas	Skačkauskas	Lithuania
Cornelis	Ros	Netherlands
Sellina	Van Bruggen	Netherlands
Esther	Van Den Heuvel	Netherlands
Alena	Gudkova	Netherlands
George	Monsanto	Netherlands
Turid	Polfus	Norway
Nina	Wessel	Norway
Seim	Øyvind	Norway
Carl	Petersen	Norway
Paulina	Pielech	Poland
Igor	Pronobis	Poland
Kaja	Krawczyk	Poland
Ewa	Polak	Poland
Halszka	Lachowicz	Poland
Łukasz	Żygadło	Poland
Agnieszka	Żygas	Poland
Natalia	Andreeva	Poland
Michal	Grodzki	Poland
Anna	Pogwizd	Poland
Jakub	Pieńkowski	Poland
Radoslaw	Sadowski	Poland
Regina	Jurkowska	Poland
Mateusz	Bajek	Poland
Weronika	Garbacz	Poland
Krzysztof	Wasowski	Poland
Filipe	Patricio	Portugal
Sergei	Chashchikhin	Russian Federation
Ivan	Zavorin	Russian Federation
Platon	Ratskevich	Russian Federation
Vsevolod	Perevozchikov	Russian Federation

Elizaveta	Borisova	Russian Federation
Alexander	Vladychenko	Russian Federation
Sergey	Baburkin	Russian Federation
Inna	Romanchenko	Russian Federation
Sviatoslav	Terentev	Russian Federation
Vladislav	Korablev	Russian Federation
Boris	Diakonov	Russian Federation
Elena	Balandina	Russian Federation
Oksana	Pekusheva	Russian Federation
Artem	Toporkov	Russian Federation
Ivan	Glushko	Russian Federation
Olga	Karsanova	Russian Federation
Dmitry	Bondarets	Russian Federation
Dmitry	Verchenko	Russian Federation
Mikhail	Shurgalin	Russian Federation
Lars	Bjorklund	Russian Federation
Peter	De Haan	Russian Federation
Karina	Bagieva	Russian Federation
Aleksandr	Savinov	Russian Federation
Andrei	Borodin	Russian Federation
Roman	Korolev	Russian Federation
Sergey	Paltov	Russian Federation
Ilya	Chernyshev	Russian Federation
Anna	Gozhina	Russian Federation
Dmitry	Makarov	Russian Federation
Anna	Makarenkova	Russian Federation
Andrey	Ostvald	Russian Federation
Marina	Borodina	Russian Federation
Ivan	Minkevich	Russian Federation
Argo	Avakov	Russian Federation
Zuzana	Sorocinova	Slovakia
Augusto	Delkader Palacios	Spain
Carmen	Claudin Urondo	Spain
Eduardo	Ramos Suárez	Spain
Maria Amparo	Tortosa-Garrigos	Spain
Sandra	Gutierrez Hernandez	Spain
María	Romero Pardo	Spain
Antonio	Alonso Marcos	Spain
Linda	Cederblad	Sweden
Mats	Ekhholm	Sweden
Inga	Sundberg	Sweden
Bernt	Karlsson	Sweden
Åke	Haggren	Sweden
Monica	Green	Sweden
Eric	Fey	Sweden
Erik	Persson	Sweden
Sara	Lindblom	Sweden
Håkan	Nyman	Sweden
Hans	Nareskog	Sweden
Karl	Lindberg	Sweden

Lars	Tollemark	Sweden
Latifa	Gharbi	Sweden
Werner	Thut	Switzerland
Anina	Weber	Switzerland
Dara	Erck	Switzerland
Francine	John	Switzerland
Martin	Damary	Switzerland
Robin	Sellers	United Kingdom
Peter	Hurrell	United Kingdom
Katherine	Igras	United Kingdom
Scott	Martin	United Kingdom
Madeleine	Cowley	United Kingdom
Ben	Jones	United Kingdom
Thomas	Barrett	United Kingdom
Martin	Brooks	United Kingdom
Robert	Mangham	United Kingdom
Haris	Sofradzija	United States of America
Jennifer	Bourguignon	United States of America
Barbara	Jacksonmcintosh	United States of America
Timothy	Scott	United States of America
Rokey	Suleman	United States of America
Kelly	Beadle	United States of America
Christopher	Beck	United States of America
Russell	Raymond	United States of America
Nabil	Al-Tikriti	United States of America
Nicholas	La Strada	United States of America
Azita	Ranjbar	United States of America
Steven	Fenner	United States of America
John	Winter	United States of America
Christopher	Barber	United States of America
Kathyrne	Harper	United States of America
Syeda Sameera	Ali	United States of America
Oiena	Lennon	United States of America
Jennifer	Plante	United States of America
Kimberly	Mccabe	United States of America
Anush	Klimczyk	United States of America
Polina	Khoreva	United States of America
Mario	Barfus	United States of America
Anthony	Barilla	United States of America
Kevin	Deegan-Krause	United States of America
Kelly	Clark	United States of America
Jeffrey	Erlich	United States of America
Elizabeth	Callahan	United States of America
Rene	Valdiosera	United States of America
April	Neubauer	United States of America
Eda	Matchak	United States of America
Marie-Celeste	Marcoux	United States of America
Jenny	Sowry	United States of America
Deborah	Walker	United States of America
Emily	Rome	United States of America



Lisa	Tilney	United States of America
Kristina	Mitchell	United States of America
Lauren	Skompinski	United States of America
Ismail	Amirah	United States of America
Farkhod	Nasriddinov	Uzbekistan
Kamola	Arslanova	Uzbekistan
Polina	Pak	Uzbekistan

### ODIHR Long-term Observers

Iryna	Shuliankova	Belarus
Patrik	Taufar	Czech Republic
Torsten	Juul	Denmark
Matti	Heinonen	Finland
Camille	Forite	France
Sylvain	Ollier	France
Mariam	Tabatadze	Georgia
Ingo	Buettner	Germany
Susanne	Greiter	Germany
Noemi	Arcidiacono	Italy
Cristiano	Barale	Italy
Marianne	de Wit	Netherlands
Marcia Andrea	Haugedal	Norway
Narve	Rio	Norway
Kinga	Bacewicz	Poland
Arkadiusz	Legieć	Poland
Alexander	Bedritskiy	Russian Federation
Varvara	Dronova	Russian Federation
Robert	Hall	Sweden
Ewa	Jacobsson	Sweden
Loïc	Degen	Switzerland
Stefan	Ziegler	Switzerland
Mark	Waller	United Kingdom
Joseph	Worrall	United Kingdom
Andrew	Gridinsky	United States of America
Sheila	Jaghab	United States of America

### ODIHR EOM Core Team

Eoghan	Murphy	Head of Mission	Ireland
Caroline	Gonthier		France
Stefan	Krause		Germany
Martin	Kunze		Germany
László	Belágyi		Hungary
Roman	Railean		Moldova
Tomasz	Jańczy		Poland
Svetlana	Chetaikina		Russian Federation
Ruslan	Ovezdurdyev		Russian Federation

Jelena	Stefanović	Serbia
Ivana	Stanojev	Serbia
Ivan	Godársky	Slovakia
Max	Bader	The Netherlands
Yevheniia	Zamrii	Ukraine
Auset	Mitchell	United States of America

## ABOUT ODIHR

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is 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.

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 150 staff.

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, 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. ODIHR implements a number of targeted assistance programmes annually, seeking to develop democratic structures.

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 people, 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**, 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. 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.

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](http://www.osce.org/odihr)).