



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

9 December 2018

ODIHR Election Observation Mission
Final Report



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**REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
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ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report¹

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an invitation from the President of the Republic of Armenia and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) for the 9 December 2018 early parliamentary elections. For election day, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM).

The Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions issued on 10 December concluded that the elections “were held with respect for fundamental freedoms and enjoyed broad public trust that needs to be preserved through further electoral reforms. Open political debate, including in the media, contributed to a vibrant campaign, although cases of inflammatory rhetoric online were of concern. The general absence of electoral malfeasance, including of vote-buying and pressure on voters, allowed for genuine competition. The integrity of campaign finance was undermined by a lack of regulation, accountability and transparency. Despite the shortened timeframe, the elections were well administered. Election day proceeded calmly and peacefully with all stages assessed positively by almost all IEOM observers, indicating general adherence to the procedures”.

Elections are comprehensively regulated by the Constitution and the 2016 Electoral Code. The May 2018 amendments to the electoral legislation expanded the list of those prohibited from campaigning, lifted restrictions for media representatives and increased or introduced sanctions and penalties for electoral offenses, in line with previous ODIHR and European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) recommendations. Other prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to campaign finance regulations, limitations on legal standing for submitting electoral complaints and citizenship requirements for candidates. Shortly before the elections, the government initiated amendments to the Electoral Code in an attempt to introduce significant changes to the electoral system and other aspects of elections. The parliament did not endorse proposed changes.

The Electoral Code prescribes a minimum of 101 members of parliament (MPs) elected through a two-tier proportional system: a closed national list and 13 open district lists. Additionally, up to four seats are reserved for the four largest national minorities according to the most recent census. If a winning party or alliance receives more than two-thirds of the initial 105 seats, other contestants that qualified for seat distribution are assigned additional seats to reach a collective one-third minority. A total of 27 compensatory seats were attributed following these elections.

The Central Election Commission (CEC) conducted its work professionally and transparently, and met all legal deadlines, despite the shortened timeframe. The CEC and the Territorial Election Commissions (TECs) enjoyed confidence among electoral stakeholders. While most CEC decisions were published in a timely manner, the TEC decisions were not published online during the election period. The CEC conducted a comprehensive voter education campaign to encourage voting, explain voting procedures and warn against vote-buying. The Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) were formed within legal deadlines. The PEC trainings were generally assessed positively; however, a

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

number of technical mistakes were observed during compilation of results protocols, indicating a need for further training in this area.

Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed overall confidence in the accuracy of voter lists. The Passport and Visa Department of the Police undertook continuous efforts to update voter data. Voters had adequate possibilities to request corrections or to register to vote at a temporary place of residence. Voters were identified on election day using Voter Authentication Devices aimed at preventing multiple voting. As required by law and despite the data privacy concerns, the CEC published online voter lists with personal data of all voters and signatures of those who voted. Those declared incapacitated by a court are not entitled to vote, despite international obligations on removing unreasonable restrictions on political rights of persons with disabilities.

In an inclusive and transparent process, the CEC registered candidate lists of all nine political parties and two party alliances that nominated candidates. Candidates must be exclusively residents and citizens of Armenia for preceding four years. The restriction for individuals with more than one citizenship to stand for election is at odds with OSCE commitments and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

Women remain underrepresented in politics. Altogether 32 per cent of candidates registered by political parties were female, and 24 per cent of MPs in the new parliament are women. Parties rarely featured women candidates as central figures in their campaigns. Women candidates only occasionally campaigned on their own and rarely appeared as speakers during campaign rallies. Some women candidates were a target of disparaging rhetoric because of their gender.

Political parties and alliances were able to conduct their campaigns freely; fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, expression and movement were fully respected. The official campaign period was very short, but campaigning started earlier, which is not prohibited by law. Disinformation, as well as inflammatory exchanges between some contestants on social networks, were noted during the campaign.

To prevent misuse of administrative resources and pressure on public employees, authorities raised awareness about relevant prohibitions among local officials and others. Political will of authorities, electoral contestants and voters themselves to discourage the selling and buying of votes was prevalent. Positively, electoral stakeholders did not report systematic efforts of vote-buying or other electoral malfeasance. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors alleged, however, that short-term contracting of a number of campaign workers and citizen observers was done, mainly by one party, for the purpose of indirectly procuring their votes.

Campaign funds may include monetary and in-kind contributions from voters, candidates and political parties, with limits set for both contributions and expenses. There are no explicit legal provisions for reporting on campaign-related funds received or spent before the start of the official campaign period, which provides an advantage to the established political parties and diminishes transparency of campaign-related funds. Some candidates bypassed the law by not using the official campaign fund of the nominating party or alliance. Contrary to previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, organizational expenses such as for office space, communication, transportation and staff, are not considered as campaign related and may therefore remain unreported, undermining the credibility of the reporting system and the transparency of information available to election stakeholders.

The constitutionally guaranteed freedom of expression was respected. While television is the primary source of political information, the use of online media and social networks has significantly increased. The broadcasters monitored by the ODIHR EOM generally covered all electoral contestants, contributing to the diversity of information available for voters to make an informed

choice. However, many private outlets appear to be strongly associated with political parties, with some demonstrating clear preference. The public television provided reasonably balanced coverage during the official campaign. Positively, the public television and a number of other media organized genuine debates, introducing candidates from all contesting political parties and alliances.

Contrary to previous ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations and international good practice, the legal standing to file complaints about electoral process is largely limited to party proxies and candidates. While the timelines for filing and resolving complaints are generally reasonable, an overlap of deadlines for making decisions on post-election complaints by TECs and filing further appeals against these decisions to the CEC is of concern.

The law provides for observation in polling stations by international and citizens observers, media, as well as by proxies of electoral contestants. The CEC registered a total of 17,813 citizen observers from 22 organizations. Though there was a general effort by established and experienced organizations to observe these elections, a number of ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about direct, including contractual, connections of some accredited citizen observers to political parties, which could compromise their impartiality. The relatively low number of citizen observers present in polling stations on election day, as compared to the number of accredited observers, indicated lack of genuine interest or intention by some to observe election-day proceedings.

Election day proceeded calmly, peacefully, free of pressure on or intimidation of voters. IEOM observers assessed opening and voting process positively in almost all polling stations observed, which reflected the PECs' adherence to procedures. However, almost three quarters of polling stations observed were not accessible for persons with reduced mobility. The IEOM assessed the vote count positively in all but two polling stations observed. Isolated instances of interference of party proxies and observers were noted. Tabulation procedures were assessed positively in almost all TECs, despite a few organizational shortcomings and the need to correct many minor errors in the PEC protocols.

The election administration received a limited number of complaints on election day violations. Notably, the TECs actively consulted the CEC during consideration of complaints. TECs performed recount of votes in 57 polling stations, both on request of running parties and alliances or based on *ex officio* decisions. The revealed mistakes were minor and did not impact the distribution of seats in the parliament. The CEC finalized the election results on 16 December. No contestant challenged the results before the Constitutional Court.

This report offers recommendations to support efforts to bring the electoral process in Republic of Armenia further in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. Priority recommendations relate to strengthening trust in the integrity of the electoral process, removing gaps and ambiguities from electoral legislation, protecting voters' private data, increasing political participation of women, improving accountability and reporting on campaign finance, supporting editorial independence of media, and enhancing training of PECs. ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities to improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

II. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Following an invitation from the President of Republic of Armenia to observe the 9 December 2018 early parliamentary elections and based on the recommendation of the Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 23 to 25 October, ODIHR deployed an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 12 November. The ODIHR EOM headed by Ambassador Urszula Gacek, included 14 experts based in Yerevan and 24 long-term observers who were deployed throughout the country from 18 November. The Mission remained in Armenia until 19 December to follow post-election developments.

For election day, the ODIHR EOM was joined by delegations of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament (EP) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM). Peter Osuský was appointed by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as Special Co-ordinator and leader of the OSCE short-term observer mission. Nahima Lanjri headed the OSCE PA delegation. Aleksander Pocij headed the PACE delegation. Heidi Hautala headed the EP delegation. Each of the institutions involved in this IEOM has endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.²

On election day, 317 observers from 39 countries were deployed, including 244 long-term and short-term observers deployed by ODIHR, as well as a 46-member delegation from the OSCE PA, a 12-member delegation from the PACE, and a 10-member delegation from the EP. Opening procedures were observed in 82 and voting in 995 polling stations across the country. Counting was observed in 103 polling stations, and the tabulation in all 38 Territorial Election Commissions (TECs).

The ODIHR EOM assessed compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections, as well as national legislation. This final report follows a Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, which was released at a press conference in Yerevan on 10 December 2018.³

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

III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Previous parliamentary elections in Armenia took place on 2 April 2017. They were the first parliamentary elections held following the 2015 constitutional amendments, which reduced the powers of the president in favour of the prime minister and the parliament. Following those elections, a government was formed by a coalition between the Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) with 58 seats and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) with 7 seats, while the Tsarukyan Alliance (31 seats) and Way Out Alliance “YELK” (9 seats) made up the opposition.

Anti-government protests in April 2018, which organizers described as a non-violent ‘velvet revolution’, resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan and a change of power. On 8 May, the parliament, in a second attempt, elected opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan as the new prime minister. The government formed by Prime Minister Pashinyan committed to electoral reform and holding new parliamentary elections within one year.

On 17 October, the government submitted draft amendments to the Electoral Code to the parliament in an attempt to introduce significant changes to the electoral system and other aspects of elections. These included removal of open district lists, a switch to a purely proportional system with a 30 per cent gender quota and lower thresholds for seat allocation.⁴ The proposed amendments failed to

² See the 2005 [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#).

³ See [all previous ODIHR election related reports on Armenia](#).

⁴ Section II.2.b of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that “fundamental elements of electoral law, in particular the electoral system, ... should not be open to amendment less than one year before an election...”.

receive the required three-fifths majority in the parliament in a final vote held three days before the call for early elections.⁵

On 1 November, the President announced early elections to be held on 9 December. These elections were the result of a tactical resignation by Prime Minister Pashinyan on 16 October aimed at dissolving the parliament. A majority of members of parliament (MPs) agreed, in advance, not to elect a new prime minister to allow early elections.⁶

Women are underrepresented in public office, holding 17 per cent of MP seats in the outgoing parliament, 1 of the 21 acting ministerial posts, none of the 10 governor positions, and 1 out of 49 mayoral posts.⁷

IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for parliamentary elections is comprehensive. The elections are primarily regulated by the 1995 Constitution last amended in 2015, and the 2016 Electoral Code last amended in May 2018.⁸ The electoral legal framework encompasses a number of other laws, including the Law on Political Parties, Law on Freedom of Assembly, Criminal Code and Code of Administrative Offences, as well as decisions of the CEC.⁹ Armenia is a party to international and regional instruments related to the holding of democratic elections.¹⁰

The May 2018 amendments to the Electoral Code and other legislation expanded the list of public officials and employees prohibited from campaigning and lifted restrictions on accreditation of media representatives for election day observation, in line with previous ODIHR and Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) recommendations. In addition, greater sanctions and penalties were set for electoral offences, and criminal liability was introduced for forcing an individual to conduct a political campaign, for facilitation of vote-buying and for charity organized for the purpose of influencing voters. The amendments also ensured that political parties, candidates and observers, in addition to the election commissions, also have the right to request investigations into suspected administrative offences.

Some prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations remain unaddressed, including those related to the exemption of organizational expenditures from campaign finance reporting requirements, narrow rules on legal standing for submitting electoral complaints, citizenship requirements for candidates, as contained in the Constitution, and electoral thresholds for alliances to enter parliament.

⁵ The parliament voted down the draft amendments on 22 October (56 votes for and 3 against) and on 29 October (62 votes for and 2 against). The amendments to the Electoral Code requires a minimum of 63 votes in support.

⁶ According to the law, the parliament is dissolved after a second failed attempt to elect a prime minister.

⁷ See [Concluding observations](#) on the combined fifth and sixth reports of Armenia, UN CEDAW Committee, CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6, 25 November 2016.

⁸ Amendments to the Electoral Code were also made in June 2018, but only in relation to conducting referenda.

⁹ For these elections, the CEC passed a total of 85 decisions. Some CEC decisions made during the previous electoral cycles were also applied by the CEC.

¹⁰ These include the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2003 Convention against Corruption, the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Armenia is also a member of the Venice Commission and Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

In order to address gaps and ambiguities identified in this and past ODIHR reports, the legal framework should be reviewed well in advance of the next elections, through an inclusive legislative process.

V. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The Electoral Code prescribes that a minimum of 101 MPs be elected through a two-tier proportional system, with candidates elected from a closed national list and 13 open district lists.¹¹ The ballot paper includes the national list as well as relevant district list presented in alphabetical order. A voter can mark a preference for one district candidate.

To qualify for representation in parliament, political parties must pass a threshold of 5 per cent (7 per cent for alliances). Seats are first distributed among parties and alliances according to the number of votes received nationwide. Then, in case the number of seats distributed is even, half the seats are distributed to the national list according to the order of candidates and half to the district candidates according to the number of preferential votes received.¹² In case the number of seats a party or alliance won is odd, one more seat is allocated to its national list.

The system provides for a total of up to four reserved seats, one for each of the four largest national minorities according to the most recent census (in 2011, Yezidis, Russians, Assyrians and Kurds). Each party or alliance may include a sub-part on its national list, listing candidates from each of the minorities. For these elections, only Bright Armenia (BA), My Step Alliance (MSA), Prosperous Armenia (PAP) and the Rule of Law Party (RoL) registered lists of national minority candidates.¹³

In line with the Constitution, a stable parliamentary majority defined as 54 per cent of seats, is needed to form a government. Should a winning list obtain a simple majority but less than 54 per cent of seats, it will be assigned additional seats in order to obtain the required stable majority. Should a winning party or alliance receive more than two-thirds of the initially allocated 105 seats, smaller parties or alliances that won seats will be assigned additional seats to reach a collective one-third minority.¹⁴ If a majority is not achieved as a result of the elections, or by forming a political coalition within six days after the results are finalized, a second round is held between the top two candidate lists 28 days after election day.¹⁵

VI. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

A. CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Elections are administered by a three-tier system comprising the CEC, 38 TECs and 2,010 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). The CEC is a permanent and professional body composed of seven members elected for a six-year term by a parliamentary vote of at least three-fifths of all MPs. All CEC members were re-appointed in October 2016.

¹¹ A maximum of 1 candidate per 15,000 voters may be included in a district list. The district candidates have to also appear on the national list.

¹² The number of seats allocated to each district list is based on votes won by contestants in all districts using the *D'Hondt* formula. The district seats are allocated according to the number of preferential votes.

¹³ For these elections, all four MPs from national minorities were elected from the MSA's candidate list.

¹⁴ The allocation of compensatory seats is conducted in the same manner as with the direct seats.

¹⁵ The top two contestants can form new alliances, which may include other parties that ran in the first round.

The CEC is in charge of the overall conduct of elections and has broad mandate and responsibilities, including issuing binding decisions, registering candidate lists, training lower level commissions, monitoring campaign finance and accrediting international and citizen observers and media representatives.

The CEC held regular open sessions, which were streamed online and attended by observers, media, and authorized representatives of electoral contestants. The CEC enjoyed confidence among all election stakeholders that the ODIHR EOM met with. All CEC decisions during the sessions observed by the ODIHR EOM were reached unanimously, although some CEC members were not participating actively in the discussions. Session agendas were established and published online in advance. Most CEC decisions were published in a timely manner.¹⁶ While the ODIHR EOM observed some TEC decisions posted on notice boards for public familiarization, the TEC decisions were not published online during the election period.¹⁷

To increase the transparency of the work of election administration, the CEC should systematically and timely publish all CEC and TEC decisions on its website.

Starting from 19 November, the CEC conducted a comprehensive campaign to encourage voting, educate voters on election day procedures, and warn against vote-buying, including through media and social networks (also in sign language). However, the ODIHR EOM noted that the distribution of printed materials was not sufficiently wide to reach voters in remote rural areas. The CEC also produced printed materials for the military, among whom there were a considerable number of first-time voters. According to the CEC, time constraints inhibited the production of materials in a format accessible to voters with visual impairment.

The Electoral Code provides for the use of web cameras in all polling stations in order to increase transparency. For these elections, the CEC applied its 2016 decision to equip the 1,500 largest polling stations with web cameras so that voting and vote-count proceedings could be recorded and observed by anyone online.¹⁸ In many polling stations observed by the ODIHR EOM, the physical layout of voting premises and improper placement of web cameras prevented following the counting procedures online in a meaningful manner.¹⁹ After the elections and before the expiry of relevant legal deadlines for the electoral dispute resolution, the footage from web cameras could be acquired by the election commissions, electoral contestants and accredited observers from the commercial service provider.²⁰

B. LOWER-LEVEL COMMISSIONS

The TECs are permanent professional bodies composed of seven members appointed by the CEC for a six-year term based on a public competition.²¹ The TECs supervise the activities of PECs, handle complaints against decisions or inactivity of PECs, organize recounts, and tabulate and transfer election results to the CEC. All the TECs met with by the ODIHR EOM appeared experienced and enjoyed the confidence of the electoral contestants. Most of the TEC members had previous election experience, and TECs generally conducted their work in an efficient and timely manner. However,

¹⁶ By law, decisions need to be published by the end of the day following their adoption.

¹⁷ The section of the [CEC website](#) containing TEC decisions has not been updated since October 2018.

¹⁸ The Electoral Code provides for coverage of all polling stations with web cameras. According to the CEC, the coverage remained limited due to technical constraints, such as lack of IT infrastructure at some polling stations.

¹⁹ Out of the 1,157 cameras checked by the ODIHR EOM, some 38 cameras were not operational at certain times of the election day. According to the CEC, this was due to intermittent difficulties, such as lack of connectivity.

²⁰ According to the CEC, the Investigative Committee, the Police and a PEC Chairperson requested 9, 7 and 1 copies of the footages, respectively. Three of the footages were not available due to absence of cameras in polling stations in question.

²¹ The TECs were formed in 2016. At least two members of each TEC must be of the less represented gender.

lack of public information on regular working hours of TECs might reduce transparency of their work.²²

All four parliamentary parties and alliances submitted nominations to the CEC for PEC membership by the legal deadline of 21 November. The positions of PEC chairpersons and secretaries were distributed proportionally to their nominating party's parliamentary representation. The allocation of those positions for specific polling stations was done through a lottery held four days ahead of the legal deadline, in an effort to allow parties more time to identify suitable candidates.²³ The training of some 16,000 PEC members organized by the CEC with the support from the international community was overall positively evaluated by the ODIHR EOM. However, the number of errors identified in the PEC results protocols during the tabulation indicate the need to place a particular focus in future training sessions on accurate completing results protocols, and dedicating more time to practical exercise (See *Election Day*).

Women were well represented in the election administration. Three of seven CEC members are women, including the deputy chairperson. Women made up 35 per cent of all TEC members; however, they were rarely holding leadership positions.²⁴ On election day, 61 per cent of PEC members at polling stations observed by the IEOM were women, and 49 per cent of visited PECs were chaired by women.²⁵

VII. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens over the age of 18 on election day are eligible to vote, except for those imprisoned for serious crimes and those declared incapacitated by a court decision.²⁶ The CRPD prescribes that there should be no restriction on the suffrage rights of persons with disabilities irrespective of the type of disability.²⁷ Despite these provisions and a previous ODIHR recommendation, restrictions on voting rights of persons with mental disabilities remain in the Constitution and Electoral Code.

Restrictions on voting rights of persons with mental disabilities should be removed.

Voter registration is passive, based on the state population register maintained by the Passport and Visa Department of the Police (PVD). The voter register includes all eligible citizens with an official permanent residence in Armenia, including a significant number of voters who are *de facto* residing abroad.²⁸ By the legal deadline of 19 November, the PVD compiled and printed preliminary voter lists, which were posted in polling stations for public scrutiny. The same day, the PVD published the

²² On a number of occasions, the ODIHR EOM visited TECs that were closed during normal working hours.

²³ In line with the proportions outlined in legislation, the RPA held the position of chairperson or secretary in 1,110 out of 2,010 PECs; the Tsarukyan Alliance held one of the leadership positions in 594 PECs; and the Way Out Alliance "YELK" and ARF held 172 and 134 of leadership positions, respectively.

²⁴ In the 38 TECs only 2 women were chairpersons and 11 were secretaries.

²⁵ The CEC did not maintain gender-disaggregated data on the composition of the PECs.

²⁶ According to the authorities, there is no formal mechanism by which persons declared incapacitated by a court are removed from the voter lists.

²⁷ See Articles 12 and 29 of the 2006 CRPD. See also, paragraph 9.4 of the 2013 CRPD Committee's Communication No. 4/2011 (*Zsolt Bujdosó and five others v. Hungary*) which stated that: "Article 29 does not foresee any reasonable restriction, nor does it allow any exception for any group of persons with disabilities. Therefore, an exclusion of the right to vote on the basis of a perceived or actual psychosocial or intellectual disability, including a restriction pursuant to an individualized assessment, constitutes discrimination on the basis of disability". Paragraph 41.1 of the 1991 OSCE Moscow Document commits participating States "to ensure protection of the human rights of persons with disabilities".

²⁸ Despite several requests, the authorities did not provide the ODIHR EOM with official data or assessments on how many citizens reside temporarily or permanently abroad.

entire voter register on its website, as required by law.²⁹ Final voter lists were published by the PVD on 6 December.³⁰ According to the CEC final election results protocol, the total number of registered voters was 2,591,276. Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed overall confidence in the accuracy of voter lists.

The Electoral Code provides sufficient mechanisms for voters to request corrections, inclusions and deletions, as well as apply for voting at a place of a temporary residence until 10 days before election day.³¹ Special voter lists are prepared for prisons and pre-trial detention centres, police and military units, and in-patient healthcare facilities. Diplomatic and military staff posted abroad and their family members could register to vote via Internet.³² The PVD described to the ODIHR EOM its continuous efforts to improve the accuracy of the voter lists through crosschecks of data against the data maintained by civil registry offices. Despite these efforts and previous ODIHR recommendations, the voter register still includes addresses where a significant number of voters are registered, which remains a concern.³³

As required by the Electoral Code, on 10 December, the CEC published scanned copies of the voter lists from all polling stations with personal data of all voters and signatures of those who voted. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed concerns about privacy of citizens' data. While the access of electoral stakeholders to information about who voted is important as a safeguard against impersonation, and could be a deterrent against potential misuse of voter list entries, the public and systematic disclosure of personal data of voters is at odds with international good practice.³⁴

Authorities should undertake legal review of measures to guarantee the protection of voters' private data while retaining meaningful access by electoral stakeholders to the voter lists.

VIII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Candidates are required to be eligible voters, at least 25 years old, have resided in and been exclusively citizens of Armenia for the preceding four years, and have a proven command of the Armenian language. Judges, prosecutors, military personnel, police officers, other categories of civil servants and election commissioners may not stand as candidates. Candidate lists may include individuals who are not party members.³⁵ The restriction for those with more than one citizenship to

²⁹ Published information included voters' names, dates of birth and home addresses, listed by polling stations.

³⁰ PECs may add a voter to supplementary voter lists before and during the election day, in case the voter provides the PEC with a decision by the PVD or a court.

³¹ According to the PVD, by the legal deadline of 29 November 12,549 voters registered to vote according to the place of their temporary residence.

³² In total, 729 such voters applied to the CEC by the deadline of 17 November, and 504 cast their votes electronically.

³³ According to the [statement](#) of Transparency International-Anticorruption Centre, there are 855 and 13 addresses containing more than 20 and 100 voters, respectively.

³⁴ Paragraph III of the 2016 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](#) highlights that "A balance needs to be struck between data protection and secrecy of the vote on the one hand and stakeholders' interest in consulting the signed (or stamped) voter lists on the other". Paragraph 10 of the 1988 CCPR General Comment 16 to the ICCPR states that "Effective measures have to be taken by States to ensure that information concerning a person's private life does not reach the hands of persons who are not authorized by law to receive, process and use it, and is never used for purposes incompatible with the Covenant." See also Article 7 of the [CoE's Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data](#).

³⁵ According to the CEC, 26 per cent of candidates were not members of the nominating party.

stand for election is at odds with OSCE commitments and case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).³⁶

Restrictions on candidate rights for persons with more than one citizenship should be removed.

In an inclusive and transparent process, the CEC registered, by 19 November, the candidate lists of all nine political parties and two party alliances that applied for these elections, with a total of 1,444 candidates.³⁷ Each contestant submitted a single national list with a minimum of 80 candidates and district lists corresponding to the 13 electoral districts.³⁸ Parties and alliances had to submit a financial deposit that is returned if the list received more than 4 per cent of valid votes.³⁹ The CEC published the candidate lists in a timely manner, thus contributing to public awareness about the contestants.

While some 32 per cent of all candidates were women, representation of women in the newly elected parliament remains low, at only 24 per cent of MPs.⁴⁰ All lists met the 25 per cent gender representation threshold prescribed by the law, whereby at least one in every group of four candidates had to be of the less represented gender. This quota, however, does not ensure the equivalent proportion of representation of women in the parliament, as half the seats are distributed according to preferential votes (open lists).⁴¹ While gender quota assumes more efforts be undertaken by political parties to encourage and facilitate women political participation, regrettably many contestants only formally included women in the candidate lists.⁴²

IX. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN

Fundamental freedoms of expression, association, assembly and movement were fully respected during the campaign. The campaign officially started on 26 November and ended at midnight on 7 December. Campaigning beforehand is neither regulated nor prohibited by law.⁴³ Soon after elections were called, parties and prospective candidates reached out to voters, mainly through Facebook, and later through rallies, canvassing, posters and media.⁴⁴ Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors said that the

³⁶ Paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that the participating States will “guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens”. In the case of [Tanase v. Moldova, 27 April 2010, Application No. 7/08](#), the ECtHR ruled that “where multiple nationalities are permitted, the holding of more than one nationality should not be a ground for ineligibility to sit as an MP”.

³⁷ Political parties registered were: ARF, BA, Christian-Popular Renaissance Party (CPRP), Citizen's Decision Social Democratic Party (CD), National Progress Party (NPP), PAP, RoL, RPA and *Sasna Tsrer* Pan-Armenian Party (STPP). Registered alliances were MSA and “We” Alliance.

³⁸ Within the legal deadline of 29 November, the CEC approved 39 personal requests for candidate withdrawal.

³⁹ The deposit is AMD 10 million (some EUR 18,180; EUR 1 is approximately AMD 550 (Armenian *Dram*)).

⁴⁰ In paragraph 40.4 of the 1991 OSCE Moscow Document, participating States affirmed that it is their “goal to achieve not only de jure but de facto equality of opportunity between men and women and to promote effective measures to that end.” See also Article 7(b) of the CEDAW and Paragraph 26 of the 1997 CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation 23 on CEDAW.

⁴¹ According to the final election results, 23 women were elected from MSA (with only 9 women from regional lists), 5 women from PAP (2 from regional lists) and 4 from BA (1 from a regional list).

⁴² With the exception of the NPP, ODIHR EOM party interlocutors noted difficulties for the political parties in recruiting experienced female candidates to meet the 25 per cent quota.

⁴³ On 23 November, the CEC issued a [statement](#) that campaigning before the official campaign period is not a violation of the Electoral Code.

⁴⁴ In early November, political parties and alliances began announcing in media who would be heading their national lists and outlining their programme priorities. During 24-25 November, some parties organized ‘walks’ through towns in the regions and Yerevan, and campaign billboards began appearing in the capital for BA, MSA, and PAP. In light of the short campaign period, some ODIHR EOM interlocutors noted challenges in concluding contracts with providers who required three to five days to put up billboards.

short campaign period favoured established parties with more resources, such as existing offices in the regions, equipment inventories, name recognition, and a history of fund-raising from supporters.⁴⁵

The campaign largely focused on affirmative elaboration of party programmes, visions of Armenia's future and, in the regions, on issues affecting local communities, although most contestants also engaged in some negative campaigning.⁴⁶ While the campaign was marked to a certain degree by inflammatory exchanges in media between some contestants, the tone with which parties and alliances addressed voters and each other generally improved later in the campaign.⁴⁷ Inflammatory rhetoric was also noted during the campaign in comment sections of online media.⁴⁸ Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors also indicated that allegedly 'fake' Facebook accounts were sources of provocation, disinformation, and insults directed at individual candidates.⁴⁹

The campaign culminated in a three-hour live debate on 5 December on the public television (TV) channel *HI*, during which the leaders of all national lists discussed, in a mutually respectful and generally congenial manner, issues, such as national security, anti-corruption, independence of the judiciary, transitional justice and economic development.

The authorities should develop voter education campaigns to promote media literacy, responsibility and social inclusion. To inhibit inflammatory and insulting language, electoral contestants could develop and adhere to a code of conduct and themselves model good practice.

The law prohibits public officials from campaigning while performing their official duties, as well as the use of public premises, official transport or material resources for campaigning.⁵⁰ To prevent misuse of administrative resources and pressure on public employees, authorities issued public warnings and briefed school principals, health workers, local officials and others about relevant prohibitions.⁵¹

⁴⁵ CD, NPP and STPP were founded in 2018; CPRP was founded in 2005, but this was its first participation in parliamentary elections.

⁴⁶ The ODIHR EOM observed a total of 63 rallies that took place in a positive atmosphere of exchanges between candidates and voters. No serious incidents were reported.

⁴⁷ Exchanges between the MSA and RPA were controversial, especially on the issue of security policy. Several high-ranking MSA candidates, including the acting Prime Minister, accused the previous RPA-led government and its current candidates of corruption, theft of army supplies, and abuse of power. Several prominent RPA candidates accused the current government of treason, abuse of power and political persecution. On 5 December, the National Security Service summoned a high-ranking RPA candidate to clarify his accusations of treason; the candidate refused the summons.

⁴⁸ Referencing a remark made by the MSA candidate during the September 2018 Yerevan city elections, several ODIHR EOM interlocutors drew attention to the public discourse that juxtaposed political forces into 'black' and 'white', or that referenced the 'old' and the 'new' Armenia. Commenters on online media often elaborated upon divisive rhetoric with personal attacks, vulgarities and derisive language targeting LGBT groups and religious minorities.

⁴⁹ Individual candidates, as well as parties and alliances informed the ODIHR EOM that they moderate their own Facebook pages and delete critical or insulting comments directed at themselves. The ODIHR EOM observed, however, that contestants did not always delete from their Facebook pages comments criticizing their electoral opponents.

⁵⁰ On 19 and 21 November, during visits to Gegharkunik and Aragatsotn, the acting Prime Minister called on rallies of supporters, to support him in the upcoming elections. He took leave in order to campaign from 26 November to 5 December. The governors of Aragatsotn, Ararat, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Shirak and Tavush, who were also candidates, took leave or resigned to campaign.

⁵¹ The mayor of Yerevan and governors of Armavir, Aragatsotn, Kotayk, Lori and Tavush described to the ODIHR EOM orders they had issued and measures they had taken to prevent abuse of administrative resources. On 19 November, the acting Prime Minister, [during his visit](#) in Gegharkunik, informed school principals and local officials of the restrictions on their involvement in campaigning. At [a 15 November cabinet meeting](#), the acting Prime Minister reminded the members of the government of the prohibitions against misuse of administrative resources in the campaign. On 3 December, during a meeting with nearly 100 candidates standing in Kotayk region, Head of Police, reiterated the prohibition of vote-buying.

Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors noted the political will expressed by authorities, electoral contestants and voters themselves to discourage the selling and buying of votes and other electoral malfeasance. Several interlocutors claimed that PAP engaged a large number of campaign workers and citizen observers on short-term contracts. Some alleged that this was done in order to indirectly buy their votes, without violating the law.

Efforts should continue among authorities, parties, media, the civil society and citizens to sustain trust in the integrity of the electoral process by eradicating all forms of electoral malfeasance and fostering human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Parties rarely featured women candidates as central figures in their campaigns.⁵² Women candidates only occasionally campaigned on their own and rarely appeared as speakers in campaign rallies observed. The audience for rallies observed by the ODIHR EOM was predominantly male, with some 15 per cent of women participating in the rallies in the regions, and some 30 per cent in Yerevan. Some women candidates were a target of disparaging rhetoric because of their gender.⁵³

Awareness should be raised by and among all electoral stakeholders about the importance of equal participation of women and men in public and political life, with a particular emphasis on the role of women within political parties. Consideration should be given to enhancing special measures to promote women candidates. This could include placing candidates from the under-represented gender in every second position on national candidate lists.

X. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign funds may include monetary and in-kind contributions from voters, candidates and political parties.⁵⁴ Contributions from legal entities, foreign and anonymous sources are not allowed.⁵⁵ The law limits campaign expenses to AMD 500 million (approximately EUR 910,000) per party or alliance. Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors perceived the limits as reasonable.

Expenses for campaigning through media, public events and printed materials must be paid from the campaign fund.⁵⁶ At the same time, the organizational expenditures, such as for office space, transportation, communications and campaign staff, can be paid from other sources and do not need to be accounted or reported as campaign expenditures, even if incurred during the official campaign period. Even if reported, such expenditures are not included within campaign expense limit.⁵⁷ The

⁵² Paragraph 3 of the [OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 7/09](#) calls on participating States to “encourage all political actors to promote equal participation of women and men in political parties, with a view to achieving better gender balanced representation in elected public offices at all levels of decision-making”.

⁵³ Although several candidates, both men and women, positioned high on party lists told the ODIHR EOM that they face harsh and derogatory language online, women candidates often received gender-based negative comments. According to a civil society organization focusing on the experience of women in the campaign, three high-profile women candidates, Lena Nazaryan (MSA), Naira Zohrabyan (PAP) and Arpine Hovhannisyan (RPA), were targeted by especially abusive language online.

⁵⁴ Respectively, up to AMD 500,000, AMD 5 million, and AMD 100 million. In-kind contributions should be reported based on their market price.

⁵⁵ Some contestants told the ODIHR EOM that, given the active role of the diaspora, determining the origin of some contributions and the citizenship of donors posed practical challenges to implementing and complying with the law.

⁵⁶ As required by law, all contestants opened dedicated bank campaign accounts by 23 November.

⁵⁷ According to Article 10 of the 2003 [CoE Recommendation Rec\(2003\)4](#) on common rules against corruption in the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns, “states should require particular records to be kept of all expenditure, direct and indirect, on electoral campaigns in respect of each political party, each list of candidates and each candidate”.

ODIHR EOM received information from various electoral stakeholders, including candidates themselves, that in financing their own campaigns directly, some candidates bypassed the campaign fund of their nominating party or alliance, in contravention of the law.⁵⁸ Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors also acknowledged that existing legal gaps could be abused for circumventing the principles of financial transparency with the danger of impeding equal conditions for the campaign.

In line with the law, all electoral contestants submitted interim and final campaign finance reports to the CEC's Oversight and Audit Service (OAS), which is in charge of campaign finance oversight.⁵⁹ The reports included the amounts of contributions to the campaign funds, campaign-related expenses and unused funds. In addition, every three working days the Central Bank submitted to the OAS data on all transactions from campaign accounts of all contestants. The OAS published on the CEC website the campaign finance reports, as well as summarized data on total amounts of contributions and expenditures per contestant, thereby contributing to financial transparency.⁶⁰

There are no explicit legal provisions for reporting on funds received or spent before the start of the official campaign period. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors emphasised that some contestants procured campaign materials before opening campaign fund bank accounts, which leads to inconsistency and potential inaccuracy in electoral contestants' reporting.⁶¹ This, together with lack of requirement to report on organizational expenses, limits the credibility of the reporting system and the transparency of information on actual costs associated with campaigning, available to election stakeholders.

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.

The procedure for record-keeping of campaign funds is prescribed by the CEC. To facilitate the campaign finance reporting process, the OAS provided guidelines and discussed regulations with most contestants. The ODIHR EOM observed a limited interest from the political parties, media and civil society to the campaign finance oversight.

While the contestants are obliged to disclose the amounts of contributions and expenditures, as well as for what purpose the expenses are incurred, the public reports do not contain any information on donors of the campaigns.⁶² The OAS only checks whether the contributions and expenses are within the legal limits, and whether the estimation of in-kind contributions is correct, but it does not check if they accurately reflect the actual campaign finances.⁶³ The OAS informed the ODIHR EOM that it does not routinely audit campaign finance on its own initiative but can request additional information from the contestants if it receives information about potential violations of the law. The OAS also noted that an increase in its staff would improve its capacity for oversight.⁶⁴ On 15 December, in two

⁵⁸ The ODIHR EOM received such information in Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Masis, Shirak, Vayots Dzor and Yerevan.

⁵⁹ The interim reports were submitted to the OAS on 5 December, and the final reports by 13 December.

⁶⁰ Summarized data was published five times during the campaign. According to the OAS, the MSA collected largest funds (around AMD 276 million), followed by RPA (AMD 128 million) and PAP (around AMD 104 million). These contestants spent some AMD 275 million, 127 million and 102 million respectively. The other eight contestants collectively received some AMD 175 million and spent some AMD 172 million.

⁶¹ According to the OAS, the contestants should report on all campaign-related incomes and expenses, as stipulated in the law. At the same time, several contestants informed the ODIHR EOM that they have to report only expenses incurred during the official campaign period.

⁶² The information on donors is provided to the OAS by the Central Bank for the incomes legality control.

⁶³ According to the OAS, expenses related to Facebook advertisements by the contestants were not reported and the OAS acknowledged that they had no means of oversight over such expenditures.

⁶⁴ In addition to the three permanent staff members, the parliamentary factions nominated four auditors to the OAS for these elections. However, the assigned auditors are not engaged in everyday activities, but engage solely in observing the oversight process for the benefit of their political parties.

days after submission of campaign finance reports and a day before announcement of the final results, the OAS concluded there were no campaign finance violations.

Legislator and the CEC should clearly define the OAS mandate for financial control and provide it with necessary material and human resources in order to ensure that the OAS is fulfilling a meaningful oversight of campaign finance.

XI. MEDIA

A. MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The media environment is diverse with more than 160 traditional media outlets and more than 200 online news portals operating in the country.⁶⁵ While TV is the primary source of political information, especially outside the capital, the online media and social networks, Facebook in particular, are a significant platform for political information and debate. According to some ODIHR EOM interlocutors, the development of local broadcasters remains of some concern, as the licensing system within the ongoing process of digitalization is seen as controversial.⁶⁶

The advertising market is limited, and only a few media are self-sustaining and, therefore, most are dependent on various types of external support.⁶⁷ The Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting does not require the full ownership structure of media outlets to be disclosed.⁶⁸ According to numerous ODIHR EOM interlocutors, many nationwide private outlets are strongly associated with political parties, including financially, which effectively circumvents the legal provisions that ban political entities from establishing a broadcasting company and interfering with its programmatic activity through sponsorship.⁶⁹

Measures should be taken to ensure full transparency of media ownership by requiring clear identification of the ultimate owners. All information on ownership and sources of funding of media outlets should be publicly disclosed.

⁶⁵ According to the Commission for Television and Radio (CTR), there are 103 TV channels, including 8 with nationwide coverage, and 24 radio stations. There are also some 40 print publications.

⁶⁶ Per the decision of the CTR, the tender for allocation of licenses provided for only one digital license per region. While analogue regional TV stations' licenses were extended until 2020 and currently both, analogue and digital TV stations broadcast in the regions, several ODIHR EOM interlocutors claimed that reducing the number of regional licenses imposes limitations on media pluralism.

⁶⁷ On 6 October, the owner of nationwide TV channel *H2* was detained under investigation of alleged involvement in bribery. His personal accounts used for financing the channel were frozen, allegedly endangering the TV's operation.

⁶⁸ Paragraph 3.5 of the 2018 Council of Europe [Guidelines on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership](#) (CM/Rec(2018)1) provides that "States can set criteria for determining control of media outlets by explicitly addressing direct and beneficial control. Relevant criteria can include proprietary, financial or voting strength within a media outlet or outlets and the determination of the different levels of strength that lead to exercising control or direct or indirect influence over the strategic decision making of the media outlet or outlets, including their editorial policy".

⁶⁹ See articles 16 and 17 of the Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting. Paragraph 8.9 of the PACE Resolution 2254 (2019) on media freedom as a condition for democratic elections calls member States to "ensure total transparency *vis-à-vis* the public when media are owned by political parties or politicians".

Public TV is financed by the state budget and is traditionally perceived as having a pro-government editorial policy.⁷⁰ At the same time, it is also viewed by a number of ODIHR EOM interlocutors as an important part of the media environment and a source of quality-based programming in general.

Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors noted improvements in media freedom and an increase in plurality of available opinions since April 2018. However, some also noted that what they described as the general ‘post-revolutionary’ atmosphere poses challenges for independent critical journalism and that the public discourse was not conducive to criticism of the government and, in particular, acting Prime Minister.

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Freedom of expression as guaranteed by the Constitution was respected during the course of campaign. Defamation was decriminalized in 2010, and a 2011 Constitutional Court decision encouraged the use of non-pecuniary measures, such as public apology and refutation.

The Electoral Code stipulates that all broadcasters must provide “impartial and non-judgmental information” on contestants’ campaigns in their news programmes. By law, the Commission for Television and Radio (CTR) oversees all broadcasters during the official campaign. In a welcome development, the CTR interpreted the provision concerning news coverage to oblige broadcasters to provide equal opportunity rather than equal amount of coverage to each contestant. This resulted in more diverse reporting on the electoral campaign.

The CTR conducted its own media monitoring. However, it focused only on quantitative analysis, without assessing the tone or other aspects of the content. Additionally, airtime data of the monitored broadcasters was provided by the broadcasters themselves and was only randomly scrutinized by the CTR.⁷¹ In compliance with the law, the CTR published two monitoring reports, one before and one after election day (on 5 and 13 December).⁷² The CTR reports did not find any violation of media regulations.

Consideration could be given to enhancing the capacity of the CTR to conduct media monitoring of political coverage fully and independently, including between elections. As previously recommended by ODIHR, consideration could also be given to enhancing the methodology so as to allow for continuous daily quantitative and qualitative monitoring, including an assessment of the tone of coverage.

For early elections, each contestant was entitled to up to 30 minutes of free of charge airtime on public TV and up to 60 minutes on public radio. In line with the law, on 20 November, the CEC

⁷⁰ Paragraph 8.10 of the PACE Resolution 2254 (2019) on media freedom as a condition for democratic elections calls member States to “guarantee the editorial independence of public service media, putting an end to any attempts to influence them or transform them into governmental media: the use of public service media to promote a specific political party or candidate must be classified as illegal misuse of public funds”. Article 14 of the PACE [Recommendation 1878 \(2009\)](#) on funding of public service broadcasting states: “The funding of public service media may be ensured, through a flat broadcasting licence fee, taxation, state subsidies, subscription fees, advertising and sponsoring revenue, specialised pay-per-view or on-demand services ... and the exploitation of their audio-visual archives. ...[P]ublic service media may have mixed funding similar to other public cultural institutions ... Each of these forms of funding must enable public broadcasters to meet the public service requirement of accessibility and affordability for the public at large”.

⁷¹ Monitoring focused on allocation of free and paid airtime, as well as measurements of airtime provided to contestants within the newscasts and other programmes. In total, the CTR monitored some 60 broadcasters, with 8 different broadcasters (5 TV channels and 3 radio stations) monitored on a daily rotational basis.

⁷² The reports are available at the CTR [website](#) as well as at the CEC [website](#).

allocated this airtime through a lottery, and the public broadcasters provided it to all the contestants.⁷³ All parties and alliances, except for the NPP, also made use of their right to purchase time for political advertising on both public and private media.⁷⁴



C. MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS

On 19 November, the ODIHR EOM began its media monitoring with quantitative and qualitative analysis.⁷⁵ There were discernible differences in media coverage of political developments before and after the start of the official campaign, with some broadcasters showing visible preferential treatment in various political programmes before the campaign started (*Kentron TV, Yerkir Media*).

With the start of the official campaign, all monitored broadcasters significantly decreased their coverage of the government and the acting Prime Minister. Notably, the share of coverage dedicated to the government at the public *HI* fell from 79 to 18 per cent, remaining exclusively positive or neutral in tone.

Authorities should continue to support editorial independence of the public media and foster citizens' access to impartial, critical and analytical political information and programmes, including when reporting on activities of officials. In addition, diversification of sources of financing for public media could be considered.

Various types of political programmes, including discussions of political platforms and campaign topics, aimed to introduce parties and alliances to voters in a more informative manner. Positively, the public broadcaster aired 11 debates, including the live debate in which the leaders of all political parties and alliances running in the elections participated.⁷⁶

Authorities could consider establishing an obligation for the public broadcasters to organize debates during the electoral campaign.

During the official campaign, most of the monitored channels showed a visible effort to cover all electoral contestants in a largely impartial manner within their news programmes, contributing to the diversity of information available for voters to make an informed choice.

Public *HI* covered all contestants in a balanced manner, providing each of them between 6 and 7 per cent of coverage in an exclusively positive and neutral tone. The private *Armenia TV* dedicated between 6 and 9 per cent to CD, CPRP, MSA, NPP, RoL and RPA, and between 1 and 3 per cent to other contestants. *Shant TV* dedicated 13 per cent of coverage to RPA in a balanced tone, giving seven other contestants (ARF, BA, CD, MSA, PAP, RoL and We-alliance) between 7 and 9 per cent. On both these private channels, the tone of coverage was largely positive or neutral, although MSA and RPA also received some critical remarks on *Shant TV*.

⁷³ The free airtime was provided from 19:30 on public TV and from 13:30 and 19:45 on public radio. The evening radio bloc was initially scheduled at 21:15 and was eventually changed to earlier time due to concerns that initial timing is less attractive for the listeners, as raised by several contestants during the lottery.

⁷⁴ There were 39 broadcasters that provided contestants with the opportunity to purchase paid advertisements.

⁷⁵ The monitoring of five TV channels, *HI* (public), *Armenia TV*, *Kentron*, *Shant TV*, and *Yerkir Media* (private TV channels) was conducted daily from 18:00 until 24:00. Political articles of three daily newspapers *Hayastani* *Hayrapetutyun* (state-funded), *Aravot* and *Haykakan Zhamanak* (private), as well as of three online media sources www.azatutyun.am, www.news.am and www.lin.am were also monitored.

⁷⁶ The *HI* leaders' live debate was available also via popular online sources www.azatutyun.am and www.civilnet.am. A number of other media outlets, such as Channel 5, *Azatutyun* online TV (part of Armenian branch of the RFE/RL service), www.lin.am, as well as some regional media (*Alt TV*, *Kyavar TV*, *Lori TV*, *Tsayg TV*) organised debates among candidates. Some featured different categories of candidates, such as women and young candidates.

Channels affiliated with specific parties did, however, demonstrate preferential treatment of relevant contestants. For example, *Yerkir Media* dedicated 23 per cent of coverage in exclusively positive or neutral tone to ARF, giving between 10 and 13 per cent to BA, MSA and RPA in a mostly neutral tone. Similarly, *Kentron TV* provided PAP with 15 per cent of overwhelmingly positive coverage, giving BA, MSA, STPP and RPA between 9 and 12 per cent of mostly neutral coverage. Similarly, MSA received 45 per cent of mostly positive coverage in the newspaper *Haykakan Zhamanak* with which it is affiliated, while RPA received there 21 per cent in a mostly negative tone.⁷⁷

Online media gave more attention to MSA in their written reporting, covering the alliance in a mostly positive or neutral tone, but also with some critical remarks, while the second most-covered contestants varied between different outlets.⁷⁸ In video reports of the monitored online media, the videos, streams and posts of MSA were also significantly covered.

XII. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Complaints against the PECs and TECs can be submitted to the TECs and CEC, respectively, while those against the CEC are under the jurisdiction of the Administrative Court. Complaints regarding voter lists can be filed with the PVD, the decisions of which can be further appealed to a general court of first instance.⁷⁹ Election-related complaints can also be filed with the Administrative Court, although this is rarely practiced. If a complaint is submitted to both a court and an election commission, the commission should not consider it.⁸⁰

Complaints may only be filed by voters, media representatives and observers with respect to violations of their individual rights, as well as by proxies and candidates on their rights and violations concerning their respective contestant.⁸¹ Party proxies, PEC members and voters in question may challenge cases of voter impersonation. Contestants, candidates, party proxies (if present during the vote count) and members of the PEC of the polling station in question, who expressed a dissenting opinion, may challenge precinct voting results at the TEC and further appeal the TEC decision thereupon to the CEC. Final election results can be appealed to the Constitutional Court only by the contestants, contrary to international good practice.⁸²

While the timelines for filing and resolving complaints are generally reasonable, there is an overlap of deadlines for consideration of the complaints by the TECs and the CEC before the finalization of the

⁷⁷ In the state-funded *Hayastani Hayrapetutyun*, the coverage of campaign was rather limited but neutral in tone and balanced in terms of space. The paper dedicated most of its coverage to the authorities: the government received 37 and the president 23 per cent, respectively. In addition, the paper paid significant attention to the Speaker of the parliament. MSA was the most covered contestant with 9 per cent, and all other contestants between 2 and 5 per cent. *Aravot* reflected the vibrant pace of the campaign and focused on two opposing contestants, giving MSA and RPA 17 and 16 per cent, respectively, with a more critical portrayal of the latter.

⁷⁸ MSA received 27 per cent of coverage on www.lin.am and 24 and 20 per cent on www.news.am and www.aztutyun.am. On www.lin.am, BA was second most-covered party and received no negative coverage. On www.news.am and www.aztutyun.am, RPA was second most-covered party and received substantial criticism. On www.aztutyun.am, BA and PAP were covered as much as RPA but in a rather neutral tone.

⁷⁹ According to the PVD, no official complaints were submitted in relation to the accuracy of the voter lists.

⁸⁰ In one case, the Administrative Court received a complaint challenging a TEC decision denying the right of an observer to be present during the tabulation process. The Court left this complaint without consideration due to its opinion that the complaint had to be first sent to the CEC. Later, however, the Court of Appeal ruled that complaint in this case should be considered by the Administrative Court.

⁸¹ Paragraph 99 of the Explanatory Report of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters states that “Standing in [electoral] appeals must be granted as widely as possible. It must be open to every elector in the constituency ... to lodge an appeal”.

⁸² Section II.3.3.f of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters recommends that “All candidates and all voters registered in the constituency concerned must be entitled to appeal. A reasonable quorum may, however, be imposed for appeals by voters on the results of elections”.

results.⁸³ In practice, most TECs did not make decisions on the post-election day complaints until the deadline for appealing such decisions. This limited the possibility of complainants to appeal these decisions to the CEC, which raises concern about effective remedy.

Deadlines for submission and resolving complaints filed to TECs and appeals against the TEC decisions after the election day should be adjusted to allow for effective remedy.

Only a few complaints were filed with the CEC and courts before election day and none to the TECs. The Administrative Court received and rejected one complaint against a PVD decision not to issue a citizenship certificate to a prospective candidate with double citizenship. Two complaints were submitted by the CSOs to the CEC on illegal campaigning, one of which was granted and one rejected. The CEC also received a number of requests to remove illegal campaign materials.

Positively, the September 2018 amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences allowed political parties and citizen observers to initiate administrative proceedings on election-related offences in the court. At the same time, potential appellants must pay court fees in order to start an administrative proceeding. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors opined that such legal costs and inconsistent application of these fees may constitute an obstacle to effective legal remedy.⁸⁴

ODIHR EOM interlocutors did not raise any concerns related to access to the complaint and appeal system in the election administration, courts or law enforcement bodies.

XIII. ELECTION OBSERVATION

The legal framework provides for both international⁸⁵ and citizen observation.⁸⁶ It also entitles party proxies and media representatives to be present in polling stations and TECs during election day. The law requires all prospective observer organizations to request accreditation and provide complete list of observers by the deadline of 15 days before the elections. This requirement may create hurdles for interested groups to mobilize observers.

Despite prior ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations, the Electoral Code requires citizen observer groups to include in their organizations' charters explicit aims related to democracy and human rights protection for at least one year preceding the call for elections. This requirement narrows the opportunity to observe.⁸⁷ Positively, the May 2018 amendments to the Electoral Code removed the limitation on the number of journalists a media outlet may accredit to report on polling.

As previously recommended, the provisions disqualifying newly-created organizations to be accredited as observers should be reconsidered. The legal deadline for application for observers' accreditation could be made closer to election day.

⁸³ A complaint or appeal related to election day or post-election irregularities must be received by TEC or CEC no later than 14 December. TECs have a right to decide on such complaints no later than 15 December.

⁸⁴ The fee to initiate an administrative case in the Administrative Court is AMD 4,000, in the Court of Appeals AMD 10,000, and in the Court of Cassation AMD 20,000. The fee is not paid if the case relates to individual rights of the complainant. ODIHR EOM interlocutors claimed that some judges apply the fee per each official complaint, others per each issue raised in the complaint.

⁸⁵ International organizations must be invited to observe by the president, the government or the CEC for the accreditation purpose.

⁸⁶ In order to be accredited by the CEC, the CSO are required to adopt an internal code of conduct for their observers and to hold their own trainings.

⁸⁷ By law, citizen observer organisations are required to adopt an internal code of conduct for their observers and to hold their own training in order to be accredited by the CEC.

By the deadline of 24 November, the CEC had received 25 applications for accreditation of the CSOs. It accredited 22 of them with a total of 17,813 observers.⁸⁸ The CEC also accredited eight international organizations with 509 international observers. Though there was a genuine effort by established and experienced CSOs to observe elections, a number of ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about direct, including contractual, connections between some of accredited organizations and political parties.⁸⁹ Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors noted that this could indicate a deliberate attempt to disguise disbursement of funds outside the electoral expenditures framework or discredit citizen observation.⁹⁰

The IEOM noted citizen observers present in 52 per cent of polling stations observed. When compared to the total number of citizen observers accredited, the relatively low number of citizen observers present in the polling stations observed by the IEOM, indicated lack of genuine interest or intention by some CSOs to observe election-day proceedings.

XIV. ELECTION DAY

A. OPENING AND VOTING

Election day proceeded calmly, peacefully, and without significant incidents or violations. There were no reports of pressure on or intimidation of voters, and election day proceedings were assessed positively by the vast majority of the IEOM observers.

The opening of polling stations was assessed positively in all 82 IEOM observations, and polls opened on time. The opening procedures were generally followed and the PECs prepared for elections in a collegial manner. Proxies of the contestants were present in 59 cases and citizen observers in 31 polling stations observed.

Throughout the day, the IEOM observers noted that a significant number of polling stations (71 per cent out of 975 polling stations observed) were inaccessible to voters requiring mobility assistance, which may have led to difficulties for some of them to vote.⁹¹ This obstacle contravenes the international obligations to guarantee equal suffrage to all voters.⁹² The CEC informed the ODIHR EOM that the polling stations premises were generally unchanged since previous elections.⁹³ Information on accessibility of polling stations was not systematically collected for review, or made

⁸⁸ The CEC rejected the application of the NGO “Pan Armenian Youth Network”, which had submitted a list of 5,406 observers, due to non-compliance with the legal requirements for registration. Moreover, the CEC sent the case to the Prosecutor’s Office for alleged forgery of documents, after which a criminal investigation was initiated. The NGOs “*Iravazor*” and “Proportional Development”, with 5,504 and 5,410 observer nominations respectively, withdrew their applications for observer status.

⁸⁹ See, for example, [statement](#) of the Transparency International Anticorruption Centre from 26 November.

⁹⁰ [Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations](#) affirms that “independent scrutiny of ... processes surrounding elections encompasses non-partisan observation and monitoring of elections by citizen organizations, which is distinct from judicial review and scrutiny by political parties, candidates or their agents”.

⁹¹ The law provides for a possibility of mobile voting for hospitalized patients, with lists prepared by heads of hospitals three days before election day. Mobile voting is not available for other voters.

⁹² Article 29(a) of the CRPD obliges States to “ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on equal basis with others ... *inter alia*, by ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to ... use”.

⁹³ In some instances, the ODIHR EOM noted that voting premises were located on a second floor without an elevator. At the same time, such situations could have been prevented by allocating another premises for voting in the same building.

readily available to the public.⁹⁴ Lack of appropriate measures undertaken by authorities notably hinders the full participation of persons with disabilities as voters and candidates in electoral process.

Authorities should take a more proactive role in ensuring an accessible environment for electoral participation of persons with disabilities and consider measures to enhance access to voting for persons with reduced mobility. Premises which lack accessibility should be identified well in advance and alternative solutions offered where required.

Voting was assessed positively in 99 per cent of IEOM observations, reflecting adherence of the PECs to relevant procedures. The presence of party proxies in polling stations (in 93 per cent of observations) and citizen observers (52 per cent) safeguarded the transparency of the electoral process. However, in a limited number of cases (3 per cent of observations) proxies and observers interfered in the process. Unauthorized people, mainly police (when not voting), were present in 5 per cent of polling stations observed, but did not interfere with the voting process. Some instances of campaign materials in close vicinity of polling stations were noted.

Voting procedures were generally followed and election materials were generally available, but the lists of candidates were not posted in 10 per cent of polling stations observed. Voters generally, but not always, marked their ballots in secrecy. When secrecy of the vote was jeopardized, it was typically due to a need for voters to wait for a free booth after being marked in the voter list. This assumes a need for proper queue control or more voting booths in some polling stations.

With the aim to combat potential impersonation, all voters in polling stations were identified through the use of Voter Authentication Devices (VADs) that contained an electronic copy of the relevant district voter list. Voters' IDs were routinely scanned to control whether voters were registered in that particular polling station and if the voter had already been marked in the district voter list as having voted. Voters' fingerprints were also scanned on election day by VADs, allowing for checks of voters' fingerprints against those on record by the PVD after the elections in case of formal complaints. The VAD identification process in polling stations observed by the IEOM, worked as intended, without any significant problems despite the tight deadline for the authorities to set, test and distribute the VADs.⁹⁵

Voters generally understood the voting procedures, with some exceptions among first-time voters and the elderly. Many IEOM observers noted that elderly people were facing some problems due to complex procedures. The IEOM observers also noted that voters in prisons were not aware of the voting procedures, which resulted in breaches of secrecy of voting.⁹⁶

Overcrowding was observed in 11 per cent of polling stations observed, and the voting process was not conducted smoothly in 7 per cent of cases, which occurred partly due to poor queue control (3 per cent) and inadequate layout of polling stations (2 per cent). Cases of family voting were observed in 4 per cent of polling stations, which raises concerns.

⁹⁴ Article 9 of the CRPD prescribes to take "appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others...to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas". See CRPD Committee [Concluding observations on the initial report of Armenia](#) (8 May 2017), CRPD/C/ARM/CO/1, paragraphs 51 and 52.

⁹⁵ The CEC with the support of the international community conducted extensive training sessions for VAD operators starting from 19 November.

⁹⁶ Voters were selecting the ballot of their choice while queuing for a free voting booth and assisted voting was not properly organized. This was observed in the prisons in Abovyan and Vanadzor.

Overcrowding in polling stations should be addressed, for example, through more suitable and premises, additional voting booths and proper queue control. The CEC should enhance voter education programmes, including on preventing family voting and importance of ballot secrecy.

B. VOTE COUNT AND TABULATION

The vote count was assessed positively in all but 2 out of 103 polling stations observed, indicating that the counting process was conducted without significant procedural violations and in a calm atmosphere free from tension.

The PECs generally followed all the steps needed before opening the ballot boxes. In 15 polling stations, the number of signatures on the voter list did not match the number of VAD voter confirmation slips (printed for each voter identified by the VADs during voting). IEOM observers noted a few ballots in a number of polling stations (in 32 observations) where, in line with the law, votes for district candidates were invalidated, even though the intent of the voter was clear, indicating a need to review procedures. Although observers could follow the counting procedures without hindrance, instances when votes for district candidates were not counted one by one (12 cases observed) and parallel counting of votes for district candidates from different candidate lists, reduced transparency of vote count in a few polling stations observed.

Police was present during seven counts observed but, as during voting, did not interfere. Contestants' proxies directly participated in the counting process in eight polling stations observed.

Eleven PECs observed had difficulties with filling in the results protocols, mainly due to lack of PECs' understanding of procedures. Although in three polling stations observed the PEC members pre-signed the results protocols, there was no recorded instance of any deliberate falsification of results. In some cases, IEOM observers were not provided with the copy of the protocol (eight cases), mostly due to a cumbersome procedure to produce a copy of the official protocol.

Tabulation procedures were observed in all 38 TECs and assessed positively in 34 of them. While the process was generally conducted well, the IEOM observers noted bad organization of handover of PEC protocols in 5 TECs, and inadequate conditions for tabulation of results in 11 TECs, mostly due to insufficient space. In some TECs, this resulted in a disorderly and opaque process during the handover of election materials. Tension among the PECs waiting in line was noted at four TECs. The IEOM observers reported instances of limited access to some stages of tabulation process. One team was not allowed to observe data entry of PEC protocols.⁹⁷

The IEOM observers noted some instances of PECs completing or correcting results protocols before submitting them to the TEC, but there were no indications of deliberate falsification of results. The IEOM observers noted in all TECs that there were minor but numerous mathematical errors in the PEC results protocols that needed to be corrected. During the tabulation, some TEC staff applied validation procedures in an inconsistent manner. The scrutiny of the published PEC protocols, conducted by the ODIHR EOM after the elections, showed that a considerable number of changes had been made to the PEC protocols without such changes being signed (certified) by the PEC chairperson or the PEC secretary, as required by law.⁹⁸ Moreover, the ODIHR EOM observed that some minor corrections were made to the results figure in contravention of the law. This raises concerns about lack of strict adherence to procedures that ensure integrity of election results.

⁹⁷ The Electoral Code provides for the right of observers to be present during the TEC sessions and to have access to all documentation.

⁹⁸ The ODIHR EOM reviewed 66 excerpts of PEC protocols and found that 23 of them contained various types of mistakes that were corrected before being published on the CEC website.

The CEC should enhance the PEC trainings on the results protocols, with a special focus on the vote count and the completion of results protocols. To ensure the integrity of election results, all corrections to the result protocols made during tabulation should be consistent, accountable and made according to the law.

XV. POST-ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

According to the CEC, citizen observers submitted 26 complaints to TECs related to various procedural violations on election day, such as the presence of more than two proxies from the same contestant or failure of the PEC to register complaints in the PEC logbook.⁹⁹ Six of these complaints resulted in withdrawal of PEC members' certificates to serve as election commissioners. One case related to improper packing of sensitive election material was forwarded by the TEC to the Administrative Court. Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about the TECs' lack of expertise and capacity to consider complaints professionally.¹⁰⁰

The law provides for a possibility for proxies and candidates who were present in the polling station in question during the vote count to request a recount of results without any justification. In total, 13 applications for recount were received by eight TECs after election day.¹⁰¹ Two applications were granted while others were rejected on formal grounds.¹⁰² Nevertheless, these and some other TECs, on their own initiative, performed recounts of votes cast in polling stations in question following the examination of PEC protocols.¹⁰³ In total, 57 recounts were conducted, leading to only minor adjustments in the results that did not impact seat allocation.¹⁰⁴

After election day, the CEC received a total of 16 complaints and appeals, the latter mainly on TECs decisions on election day violations submitted by CSOs.¹⁰⁵ The CEC decided on only four complaints prior to the announcement of final results, rejecting the remaining appeals as filed after the deadline of 14 December. The CEC also applied a narrow legal interpretation reasoning that only individual observers but not their nominating CSO have legal standing to submit complaints. In a welcome step, the CEC maintained on election day an electronic public register of alerts and official complaints received as well as actions taken.¹⁰⁶

After the election day, the Administrative Court received eight claims from citizen observers alleging electoral violations, mainly related to the failure of PECs to record all required information in the PEC logbook, but their adjudication took place after the departure of the ODIHR EOM.¹⁰⁷

Efforts should be made to increase the expertise and capacity of the election administration and courts in election dispute resolution. In order to increase transparency and easy access to information

⁹⁹ Candidates or proxies of contestants did not submit any complaints on election day violations.

¹⁰⁰ According to the CEC, the TECs, during the consideration of complaints, were not always certain how to proceed and took most of their decisions in active consultation with the legal department of the CEC.

¹⁰¹ Recounts were requested in TECs 8, 9, 16, 21, 23, 34, 35, 38 by BA, PAP and ARF.

¹⁰² Ten requests were submitted by candidates who were not present during the vote-count in the polling stations in question and one was submitted after the deadline.

¹⁰³ Including in the TECs 1, 10, 14, 15, 25, 37.

¹⁰⁴ As a result of 34 recounts, there were no changes to the voting results. Minor changes were made to 23 PEC protocols. In one case in Armavir, it was found that 44 votes were attributed to a wrong candidate. This case was referred by the TEC to the prosecutor for further investigation.

¹⁰⁵ One was not considered as it was submitted after the deadline for requesting a recount, one was satisfied and others rejected. A further four appeals were submitted to the Administrative Court.

¹⁰⁶ The Administrative court maintains the online database of election-related court decisions on a regular basis.

¹⁰⁷ Expedited election-specific timeframe is not applied to such claims, and they are considered according to usual deadlines for administrative adjudication.

related to dispute resolution, the CEC could consider maintaining a permanent public register of complaints and appeals received and considered throughout the electoral process.

On 14 December, the Prosecutor's Office reported that it had initiated six criminal cases on voter impersonation, vote-buying, and instances of pressure on voters and candidate proxies.¹⁰⁸ In addition, the Prosecutor's Office received 442 allegations from various stakeholders, including voters and media, about irregularities that occurred before, on and after election day.¹⁰⁹

The final election results, including the allocation of seats in parliament, were announced by the CEC on 16 December. According to the voting results, the winning alliance would receive more than two-thirds of MP seats. In line with the law, the remaining two parties that won seats were assigned compensatory seats to reach a collective one-third minority. The new parliament convened on 14 January 2019 and has 132 MPs, including 32 women. No electoral contestants challenged the results before the Constitutional Court. Positively, most electoral contestants publicly congratulated the winners.¹¹⁰

XVI. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations as contained throughout the text are offered with a view to further 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 past ODIHR recommendations that have not yet been addressed.¹¹¹ ODIHR stands ready to assist the authorities of the Republic of Armenia to further improve the electoral process and to address the recommendations contained in this and previous reports.

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Efforts should continue among authorities, parties, media, the civil society and citizens to sustain trust in the integrity of the electoral process by eradicating all forms of electoral malfeasance and fostering human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. In order to address gaps and ambiguities identified in this and past ODIHR reports, the legal framework should be reviewed well in advance of the next elections, through an inclusive legislative process.

¹⁰⁸ See the [statement](#) from the Prosecutor's Office (in Armenian only).

¹⁰⁹ Among others, the Prosecutor's Office was investigating 113 cases of potential voter impersonation, 14 attempts to influence a voter's will, 11 cases of potential vote-buying, 9 cases of violation of the secrecy of the vote, 3 cases of falsification of voting results, and 2 cases of forcing to campaign.

¹¹⁰ In its [post-election statement](#), RPA wished success to the incoming parliament and new government, but noted that the "elections were democratic in their form, but not in content". ARF, in [its statement](#), concluded that "People voted for the individual and not ideology".

¹¹¹ According to the 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 the ODIHR EOM as follows: recommendations 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 17 and 23 from the [final report on the 2012 parliamentary elections](#) (2012 Final Report), recommendations 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 22, 23 and 24 from the [final report on the 2013 presidential election](#) (2013 Final Report), as well as 1, 3, 17, and 23 from the [final report on the 2017 parliamentary elections](#) (2017 Final Report) are fully implemented. Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 18, 20 and 25 of the 2012 Final Report, recommendations 4, 6, 8, 17, 20, 21 and 26 of the 2013 Final Report, as well as 2, 6, 20 and 21 of the 2017 Final Report are mostly implemented. Recommendations 4, 7, 9, 15, 18, 19 and 22 of the 2012 Final Report, recommendations 918, 25 and 27 of the 2013 Final Report, as well as 2, 9, 11, 12 and 25 of the 2017 Final Report are partially implemented. See also www.paragraph25.odhr.pl.

3. Authorities should undertake legal review of measures to guarantee the protection of voters' private data while retaining meaningful access by electoral stakeholders to the voter lists.
4. Authorities should continue to support editorial independence of the public media and foster citizens' access to impartial, critical and analytical political information and programmes, including when reporting on activities of officials. In addition, diversification of sources of financing for public media could be considered.
5. Awareness should be raised by and among all electoral stakeholders about the importance of equal participation of women and men in public and political life, with a particular emphasis on the role of women within political parties. Consideration should be given to enhancing special measures to promote women candidates. This could include placing candidates from the under-represented gender in every second position on national candidate lists.
6. The CEC should enhance the PEC trainings on the results protocols, with a special focus on the vote count and the completion of results protocols. To ensure the integrity of election results, all corrections to the result protocols made during tabulation should be consistent, accountable and made according to the law.
7. 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.

B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal Framework

8. Authorities should take a more proactive role in ensuring an accessible environment for electoral participation of persons with disabilities and consider measures to enhance access to voting for persons with reduced mobility. Premises which lack accessibility should be identified well in advance and alternative solutions offered where required.
9. Restrictions on voting rights of persons with mental disabilities should be removed.

Election Administration

10. To increase the transparency of the work of election administration, the CEC should systematically and timely publish all CEC and TEC decisions on its website.
11. Overcrowding in polling stations should be addressed, for example, through more suitable and premises, additional voting booths and proper queue control. The CEC should enhance voter education programmes, including on preventing family voting and importance of ballot secrecy.

Candidate Registration

12. Restrictions on candidate rights for persons with more than one citizenship should be removed.

Electoral Campaign

13. The authorities should develop voter education campaigns to promote media literacy, responsibility and social inclusion. To inhibit inflammatory and insulting language, electoral contestants could develop and adhere to a code of conduct and themselves model good practice.

Campaign Finance

14. Legislator and the CEC should clearly define the OAS mandate for financial control and provide it with necessary material and human resources in order to ensure that the OAS is fulfilling a meaningful oversight of campaign finance.

Media

15. Measures should be taken to ensure full transparency of media ownership by requiring clear identification of the ultimate owners. All information on ownership and sources of funding of media outlets should be publicly disclosed.
16. Consideration could be given to enhancing the capacity of the CTR to conduct media monitoring of political coverage fully and independently, including between elections. As previously recommended by ODIHR, consideration could also be given to enhancing the methodology so as to allow for continuous daily quantitative and qualitative monitoring, including an assessment of the tone of coverage.
17. Authorities could consider establishing an obligation for the public broadcasters to organize debates during the electoral campaign.

Complaints and Appeals

18. Deadlines for submission and resolving complaints filed to TECs and appeals against the TEC decisions after the election day should be adjusted to allow for effective remedy.
19. Efforts should be made to increase the expertise and capacity of the election administration and courts in election dispute resolution. In order to increase transparency and easy access to information related to dispute resolution, the CEC could consider maintaining a permanent public register of complaints and appeals received and considered throughout the electoral process.

Election Observation

20. As previously recommended, the provisions disqualifying newly-created organizations to be accredited as observers should be reconsidered. The legal deadline for application for observers' accreditation could be made closer to election day.

ANNEX I: FINAL ELECTION RESULTS¹¹²

Political party/Alliance	Number of votes received	Percentage of votes	Direct seats	Compensatory seats	Total number of seats	Percentage of seats
Republican Party of Armenia	59,083	4.7				
Citizen's Decision Social-Democratic Party	8,514	0.7				
Armenian Revolutionary Federation	48,816	3.9				
My Step Alliance	884,864	70.4	88		88	66.7
Bright Armenia	80,047	6.4	7	11	18	13.6
Christian-Popular Renaissance Party	6,458	0.5				
National Progress Party	4,121	0.3				
"We" Alliance	25,176	2.0				
Rule of Law	12,393	1.0				
Sasna Tsrer Pan-Armenian Party	22,868	1.8				
Prosperous Armenia	103,801	8.3	10	16	26	19.7
Total	1,256,141	100.0	105	27	132	100.0

Total number of voters registered	2,591,276
Total number of voters who voted	1,261,105 (48.66 per cent)
Number of invalid ballots (for candidate lists) ¹¹³	4,706
Number of votes cast through mobile voting	1,209
Number of votes cast from abroad electronically:	504

¹¹² Source: [The CEC website](#).

¹¹³ The number of invalidated preferential votes for district candidates is not recorded in the PECs protocols.

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

OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Peter Osuský	Special Co-ordinator	Slovakia
Nahima Lanjri	Head of Delegation	Belgium
Maximilian Unterrainer	MP	Austria
Desislava Atanasova	MP	Bulgaria
Piet De Bruyn	MP	Belgium
Vincent Van Quickenborne	MP	Belgium
Jan Bauer	MP	Czech Republic
Karla Marikova	MP	Czech Republic
Zdenek Ondracek	MP	Czech Republic
Pavel Plzak	MP	Czech Republic
Mika Raatikainen	MP	Finland
Aude Bono-Vandorme	MP	France
Francois Jolivet	MP	France
Sereine Mauborgne	MP	France
Theodora Chachlaki	MP	Greece
Paul Viktor Podolay	MP	Germany
Anastasia Gkara	MP	Greece
Georgios Varenenos	MP	Greece
Mauro Del Barba	MP	Italy
Gianluca Castaldi	MP	Italy
Paola Taverna	MP	Italy
Vito Vattuone	MP	Italy
Murat Temirzhanov	MP	Kazakhstan
Susana Amador	MP	Portugal
Miguel Santos	MP	Portugal
Costel Neculai Dunava	MP	Romania
Danut Pale	MP	Romania
Igor Chernyshenko	MP	Russian Federation
Aleksei Kornienko	MP	Russian Federation
Gennadii Onishchenko	MP	Russian Federation
Charlotta Olsson	MP	Sweden
Edward Riedl	MP	Sweden
Sven-Olof Sallstrom	MP	Sweden
Jennifer Hilton	MP	United Kingdom
Stacy Hope	Helsinki Committee	United States of America
Everett Price	Helsinki Committee	United States of America
Roeland Jansoone	Staff of Delegation	Belgium
Silvia Andrisova	Staff of Delegation	Czech Republic
Anne-Cecile Blauwblomme Delcroix	Staff of Delegation	France
Sergey Karseka	Staff of Delegation	Russian Federation
Maria Zholobova	Staff of Delegation	Russian Federation
Arturo Biglia	OSCE PA Secretariat	Belgium
Andreas Baker	OSCE PA Secretariat	Denmark
Tim Knoblaue	OSCE PA Secretariat	Germany
Semyon Dzakhaev	OSCE PA Secretariat	Russian Federation
Iryna Sabashuk	OSCE PA Secretariat	Ukraine

Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly

Aleksander Pocielj	Head of Delegation	Poland
Alberto Ribolla	MP	Italy
Adriana Diana Tuşa	MP	Romania
Andrej Šircelj	MP	Slovenia
José Montilla	MP	Spain
Soraya Rodríguez Ramos	MP	Spain
Andrii Lopushanskyi	MP	Ukraine
Yuliya Lovochkina	MP	Ukraine
Katharina Pabel	Venice Commission	Austria
Michael Janssen	Venice Commission	Germany
Daniele Gastl	PACE Secretariat	France
Bogdan Torcătoriu	PACE Secretariat	Romania

European Parliament

Heidi Hautala	Head of Delegation	Finland
Rebecca Harms	MEP	Germany
Joachim Zeller	MEP	Germany
Julia Pitera	MEP	Poland
Jose Ignacio Faria	MEP	Portugal
Clare Moody	MEP	United Kingdom
Robert Golanski	Staff of Delegation	Poland
Alain Crespinet	EP Secretariat	Belgium
Viviane Chao	EP Secretariat	Belgium
Julien Crampes	EP Secretariat	France

ODIHR EOM Short-term Observers

Gabriele Juen	Austria
Hans Lampalzer	Austria
Gleb Khmelyov	Belarus
Aliaksandr Shpakouski	Belarus
Lyudmil Iliev	Bulgaria
Carmen Grlica	Croatia
Bo Flindt	Denmark
Peder Larsen	Denmark
Ingrid Poulsen	Denmark
Suzanne Lassen	Denmark
Anja Siljak	Denmark
Stig Skovbo	Denmark
Line Urban	Denmark
Kadri Lepp	Estonia
Max Hatvala	Finland
Julien Arnoult	France
Marie-Florence Bennes	France
Peggy Corlin	France
Melissa Diagne	France
Catherine Greze	France
Catherine Iffly	France
Stéphanie Koltchanov	France
Roman Kwiatkowski	France
Laurent Lemarchand	France
Mathieu Lemoine	France
Alexandra Lepeltier	France
Claire Lummaux	France
Salim Mejahdi	France

Antoine Meyer	France
Clément Mondamert-Chartron	France
Sabrina Rouigui	France
Paul Ruotte	France
Nicolas Teindas	France
Daniel Zeldine	France
Judith Abdel-Massih-Thiemann	Germany
Franziska Best	Germany
Katharina Franziska Braig	Germany
Andreas Dr. Dietz	Germany
Zuzana Dudek	Germany
Stefanie Dufaux	Germany
Heiko Gothe	Germany
Uwe Hellner	Germany
Johannes Hoerber	Germany
Siegfried Holzapfel	Germany
Simon Ilse	Germany
Helmut Klawonn	Germany
Christoph Laug	Germany
Janina Markewitsch	Germany
Maik Martin	Germany
Cosima Peissker-Meyer	Germany
Brigitte Pilibosian	Germany
Elenor Richter Lyonette	Germany
Marlien Schlaphoff	Germany
Marlene Sieck	Germany
Benjamin Smale	Germany
Michael Wahlen	Germany
Anja Witte	Germany
Martin Wolff	Germany
Ragnhildur Arnórsdóttir	Iceland
Albert Jónsson	Iceland
Gerard Buckley	Ireland
Deirdre Grogan	Ireland
Seamus Martin	Ireland
Elizabeth Mullan	Ireland
Edward Naessens	Ireland
Andrea Benedini	Italy
Deborah Bruschi	Italy
Giovanni Capellino	Italy
Silvia Longatti	Italy
Serena Sartini	Italy
Giulio Savina	Italy
Fumiaki Inagaki	Japan
Tadahiro Kitamura	Japan
Terue Okada	Japan
Aigerim Fazylova	Kazakhstan
Guntis Lapsa	Latvia
Jomantas Pabiržis	Lithuania
Aurelijus Sabonis	Lithuania
Valdas Steponavičius	Lithuania
Dovile Vaisvilaite	Lithuania
Ludovico Alcorta	Netherlands
Gerda Dane	Netherlands
Eduard De Bouter	Netherlands
Maria Vrijens	Netherlands
Hanna Mollan	Norway
Carl Petersen	Norway

Eldrid Roeine	Norway
Marte Sinderud	Norway
Michal Azarkiewicz	Poland
Mariusz Gołdysiak	Poland
Kaja Krawczyk	Poland
Slawomir Misiak	Poland
Ewa Polak	Poland
Marcin Prengowski	Poland
Agnieszka Rutkowska	Poland
Marzena Gabriela Ryszkowska	Poland
Adam Sauer	Poland
Agnieszka Stankiewicz	Poland
Paulina Szycko	Poland
Karina Wegrzynowska	Poland
Łukasz Żygadło	Poland
Luminita Ciobanu	Romania
Calin Radu	Romania
Laurentiu Vlad	Romania
Kristina Bogdanova	Russian Federation
Andrei Borodin	Russian Federation
Yury Boychenko	Russian Federation
Sergei Chashchikhin	Russian Federation
Konstantin Degtyarev	Russian Federation
Olesya Dikun	Russian Federation
Igor Ermolenko	Russian Federation
Anastasiia Gaidalenok	Russian Federation
Dmitry Groshev	Russian Federation
Konstantin Guz	Russian Federation
Alexander Ignatov	Russian Federation
Andrey Karbovskiy	Russian Federation
Alexander Kobrinskiy	Russian Federation
Vasily Korchmar	Russian Federation
Mikhail Krutikov	Russian Federation
Anastasiia Kupriianova	Russian Federation
Anna Lysenina	Russian Federation
Aleksei Malenko	Russian Federation
Alexander Mamin	Russian Federation
Aleksei Markov	Russian Federation
Andrei Molochkov	Russian Federation
Vladimir Novikov	Russian Federation
Sergey Overchenko	Russian Federation
Georgii Rubtsov	Russian Federation
Mikhail Shurgalin	Russian Federation
Aleksandra Simonova	Russian Federation
Evgeny Skobkarev	Russian Federation
Lev Tarskikh	Russian Federation
Konstantin Tasitc	Russian Federation
Svyatoslav Terentyev	Russian Federation
Alla Trimailova	Russian Federation
Ksenia Vinogradova	Russian Federation
Maria Vorozhtsova	Russian Federation
Petr Yakhmenev	Russian Federation
Sergey Zenkov	Russian Federation
Anna Zhurovich	Russian Federation
Andrei Ziuzin	Russian Federation
Alina Zolotareva	Russian Federation
Katarína Zembjaková	Slovakia
Tatjana Kovačič	Slovenia

María José De La Fuente Rivas	Spain
Mikael Andersson Elfgrén	Sweden
Jonas Hult	Sweden
Katrin Lindén	Sweden
Lennart Myhlback	Sweden
Nilsson Per	Sweden
Erik Persson	Sweden
Kristina Snoder	Sweden
Ann-Sofie Sten	Sweden
Zackie Birgitta Madeleine Ströje Wilkens	Sweden
Hans-Ivar Swärd	Sweden
Marco Battaglia	Switzerland
Fabrizio Mario Giuseppe Comandini	Switzerland
Annette Keller	Switzerland
Stefano Giordano Ottavio Lazzarotto	Switzerland
Barbara Egger Maldonado	Switzerland
Martin Minder	Switzerland
Tessa Nerini	Switzerland
Christine Beguelin Sargenti	Switzerland
Jon cristian Sandi	Switzerland
Fiona Anderson	United Kingdom
Leslie Barnfield	United Kingdom
Patricia Cavanagh	United Kingdom
Christopher Damandl	United Kingdom
Lewis Emmerton	United Kingdom
George Fergusson	United Kingdom
Leila Fitt	United Kingdom
Alexander Folkes	United Kingdom
Scott Martin	United Kingdom
David Mcardle	United Kingdom
Stephen Mcnamara	United Kingdom
Eimear O'Casey	United Kingdom
Andrea Aldrich	United States of America
Lyla Jamil Andrews Bashan	United States of America
Ethan Arnheim	United States of America
Joseph Brossart	United States of America
Benjamin Burnes	United States of America
Robert Downes	United States of America
Rachel Eschenbacher	United States of America
John Finkbeiner	United States of America
Jarret Fisher	United States of America
Jeffrey Gelman	United States of America
Mary-Margaret Hesse	United States of America
Robert Hyams	United States of America
Leo Jilk	United States of America
Tamara Kowalski	United States of America
Frank Albert Lavoie	United States of America
Tereza Lewis	United States of America
David-Sven Lindholm	United States of America
Kathryn McLaughlin	United States of America
Thambydurai Muthukumaraswamy	United States of America
Tara O'Connor	United States of America
Robert Paullin, Jr	United States of America
Jeremy Pine	United States of America
Raleigh Quesenberry	United States of America
Michael Schuetz	United States of America
Steven Shapiro	United States of America
Miklos Solyom	United States of America

Bobbie Jo Traut
Richard Wheeler

United States of America
United States of America

Long-term Observers

ODIHR EOM Core Team

Urszula Gacek	Head of Mission	Poland
Enira Bronitskaya		Belarus
Kerstin Dokter		Germany
László Belágyi		Hungary
Goran Petrov		North Macedonia
Michał Gałkowski		Poland
Tomasz Jarczy		Poland
Katarzyna Janki-Kowalczyk		Poland
Roman Railean		Romania
Saša Pokrajac		Serbia
Ranko Vukčević		Serbia
Robert Bystrický		Slovakia
Ivan Godarsky		Slovakia
Adolfo Cayuso-Martinez		Spain
Farrukh Juraqulov		Tajikistan
Barbara Davis		United States of America

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Merete Laubjerg		Denmark
Alexandre Benz		France
Sabine Ohayon		France
Nadia Yakhlaf-Lallemand		France
Kerstin Bröring		Germany
Thomas Oye		Germany
Suhail Ahmad		Ireland
Noemi Arcidiacono		Italy
Cesira Damiani		Italy
Nurul Rakhimbekov		Kazakhstan
Bojana Živković		Montenegro
Toril Lund		Norway
Anne Skatvedt		Norway
Elzbieta Ciesielska		Poland
Knut Bergknut		Sweden
Nicolas Heyum		Sweden
Daniele D'Esposito		Switzerland
Loic Alexis Degen		Switzerland
Victor Pazinski		Switzerland
Ros Cornelis		Netherlands
Dominic Howell		United Kingdom
Melanie Leathers		United Kingdom
Shelley Mc Thomas		United States of America
Marsha Weinermann		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 coordinates 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 (<http://www.osce.org/odihr>).